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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**THE INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS OF  
PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS IN  
COUNTERTERRORISM**

by

Mehmet Fevzi Dörtnadak

December 2008

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**THE INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS  
IN COUNTERTERRORISM**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS**

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## ABSTRACT

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon to the world, yet it remains difficult to define and to counter. Countering terrorism requires several measures that must be taken at the same time. Counterterrorism strategies of most countries depend on military measures. However, those strategies should also focus on nonlethal measures, such as economic, political, and social measures. The psychological dimensions of terrorism must be understood, evaluated, and used in countering terrorism. This study suggests that psychological operations, as nonlethal military operations, can be used to influence individuals not to join terrorist organizations and to facilitate defections from terrorist organizations.

However, in order to implement effective psychological operations, one has to have appropriate intelligence about terrorist organizations. Examining terrorist organizations helps us to identify their vulnerabilities and obtain this intelligence. This thesis concludes that terrorists' motivations, terrorist organizations' radicalization, recruitment, and conversion processes, ideology, goals, strategies, and general structure form the intelligence requirement for psychological operations in counterterrorism. This study also examines the terrorist organization, al-Qaeda, to show its vulnerabilities.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. IMPORTANCE AND PURPOSE**

The first major terrorist attack against the United States was a suicide attack against the United States embassy in Beirut in April 1983, killing 63 people, including 17 Americans. The first attack was not the last one. Terrorists have conducted more than twenty attacks against United States facilities all over the world. The 2001 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center was the twenty-first major attack conducted by terrorists. In the aftermath of this attack, the United States started and has led the campaign of Global War on Terrorism. They have invaded Afghanistan and Iraq and have encountered insurgencies run by terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda and its affiliates. The insurgencies have increased in effectiveness over the years. The United States, though, has made significant improvements in disrupting and destroying terrorist organizations' activities. The destruction of al-Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan, the elimination of many group leaders, and the growing resolve of many countries to take action against al-Qaeda and its associates are the significant successes of the United States' strategy of counterterrorism. However, terrorist organizations have adopted new methods in order to radicalize and recruit new members and have conducted attacks against the United States forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have taken advantage of the information age. Terrorist organizations have successfully conveyed to and imposed their ideologies upon populations, by whom they have been supported. Although the United States has the most trained and equipped security and intelligence agencies in the world, the attacks could still not be prevented by the United States.

The same situation is relevant for other countries, which have problems with terrorist organizations. Turkey is one of those countries, which has been suffering from direct and indirect effects of terrorism. Turkey has been fighting against the terrorist organization, the Kurdistan Workers Party (the PKK, also called KADEK, Kongra-Gel,

and KGK) for more than thirty years and has lost more than 30,000 citizens and security forces during these years. Although Turkey also has powerful armed forces, they have difficulty in deterring terrorists from conducting attacks.

The cases of terrorism have proved that military sanctions alone are not adequate or efficient in destroying terrorism. In order to counter terrorism, the psychological dimensions of the war must be understood and evaluated. The nature of terrorist organizations and individual terrorists, such as their motivations, beliefs, and ideologies, have to be completely understood and the connection between terrorist organizations and the population, by whom they are supported, must be defined and severed. The vulnerabilities, which can be obtained from an analysis of their nature and connection, have to be understood in order to degrade terrorists' morale and motivation. By exploiting these vulnerabilities, terrorists can be deterred from conducting terrorist activities.

Therefore, with the employment of political, social, and economic sanctions, psychological operations should be considered a fundamental aspect of any military campaign to deter terrorists and sever the support of the population for terrorists.

Psychological operations, as defined in the *U.S. Army Field Manual 3-05-301*, are “planned operations that convey selected information and indicators to foreign target audiences (TAs) to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately, the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.”<sup>1</sup> If psychological operations are properly employed, the motivation and combat efficiency of an enemy will decrease and dissidence and disaffection will be caused within the enemies’ ranks. Psychological operations may also promote resistance within a civilian populace against a hostile regime or a terrorist organization. Therefore, psychological operations can be used to deter terrorists, disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations’ activities, and influence the population to sever the support given to the terrorist organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2003), 439.

However, psychological operations performed as military operations must be conducted appropriately to provide optimal effect on the target audience. Disseminating an improper message to terrorists and a population, with a lack of accurate information, may cause undesirable retaliation against allied forces on the ground. Furthermore, the support of the population for the terrorist organizations may increase as an outcome of this improper message.

In order to compose a correct message and disseminate the message to the correct target audience, one needs reliable and useful intelligence about the enemy. In psychological operations, a unique approach to intelligence is required since conventional intelligence is different from intelligence needed in psychological operations. Psychological operations require familiarity with the culture of the target audience, the ability to speak the language, and the ability to bridge between one's own culture and that of the target audience. In short, this type of intelligence requires an understanding of anthropology, psychology, and political science.<sup>2</sup> When considering terrorism and terrorist organizations, the required intelligence is also different from that used in psychological operations and is difficult to collect. Terrorist organizations do not possess the exact basic characteristics of a target audience. Terrorists are embedded in the population in which they live and cannot be detected unless they are separated from that population. Terrorists have their own beliefs, emotions, and motivations. Therefore, intelligence services and other units must provide accurate and exact intelligence about culture and motivation, and a concise psychology of terrorists, which can be used in psychological operations against them. Moreover, in order to cut the support of the population, cultural intelligence of terrorist organizations must be accurate.

In conclusion, in order to be successful in the war against terrorists, psychological operations must be considered along with other military tools in order to deter terrorists, disrupt terrorists' activities, and sever support given by a population. Implementing effective psychological operations requires accurate intelligence about vulnerabilities of

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<sup>2</sup> Ron Schleifer, Table of Contents, in *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies* (Brighton; Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), 241, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0614/2006017721.html> (accessed December 2, 2008).

terrorist organizations, which can be obtained from the analysis of terrorists' motivations and psychology. Moreover, intelligence necessary in psychological operations is different from conventional intelligence and it is about the culture of terrorist organizations and the populations with which they work.

In this context, this thesis will identify the intelligence requirements for psychological operations in counterterrorism operations. This thesis seeks to determine the characteristics of terrorist organizations in order to find their vulnerabilities. With knowledge of those vulnerabilities, officials can implement effective psychological operations against the foot soldier cadre and the individuals, who are inclined to be radicalized and recruited because of their beliefs. In this regard, terrorism and the characteristics of terrorist organizations will be discussed as a basis for implementing effective psychological operations to counter terrorism.

## **B. BACKGROUND**

After the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States encountered insurgencies organized by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and its associates. The increasing support by the Iraqi and Afghan populations for the insurgencies has signaled that terrorist activities cannot be defeated by normal military operations. An indirect approach must be considered. First, the support given by the population to terrorists must be severed by using psychological operations with the employment of other military actions and political, social, and economic sanctions. Second, psychological operations against terrorist organizations' members have to be conducted in order to deter terrorists.

As an example, Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines shows an indirect approach to sever population support for the insurgency through use of psychological operations. In February 2002, the United States dispatched a unit composed of 1,300 U.S. troops to the southern Philippines. Its mission was to conduct unconventional warfare operations by, with, and through indigenous forces to help the government separate the population from, and then destroy, Abu Sayyaf, an al-Qaeda-linked group. Using their language and cultural skills, the teams quickly formed a bond with local villagers to

provide a secure environment. Once security was provided, humanitarian assistance and civic action projects were implemented. Additionally, psychological operations were conducted to highlight the negative effects of terrorism.<sup>3</sup>

Though leaders of terrorist organizations cannot be easily deterred, since they are radicalized, the foot soldiers of terrorist organizations, who do not have strong ideological beliefs, can be deterred. Since they are not fully radicalized and they may have many things that they hold dear, they are subject to manipulation. It is known that Israel has deterred many terrorists. By using terrorists' families as a deterrence asset, Israel has prevented many suicide attacks against military forces.<sup>4</sup> Strategies that have an embedded psychological dimension can deter terrorists.

In conclusion, it could be said that psychological operations have been used to influence individuals in order to produce desired behaviors from them. These strategies and tactics can also be used for terrorist organizations. Implementation of effective psychological operations may deter some terrorists from conducting attacks and also prevent individuals from joining terrorist organizations.

## C. METHODOLOGY

Psychological operations can be used to counter terrorism by deterring terrorists and disrupting their activities. Moreover, with employment of psychological operations, populations can be influenced and persuaded to sever their support for terrorists. For this research, several questions must be addressed:

- What is terrorism?
- What are the beliefs, motivations, and vulnerabilities of terrorists?
- Which methods do they use to convince foot soldiers to conduct attacks?
- Can terrorist organizations be examined as a system?
- What is psychological warfare?

---

<sup>3</sup> Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-PHILIPPINES and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review* 86, no. 6 (November/December 2006): 2.

<sup>4</sup> Doron Almog, "Cumulative Deterrence and the War on Terrorism," *Parameters* 34 no. 4 (Winter 2004/2005): 15.

- How are psychological operations implemented?
- What kind of measures of effectiveness can be developed to gauge the effectiveness of psychological operations?
- What kind of intelligence is required in order to plan and execute effective psychological operations to counter terrorism?

In order to answer these questions, this thesis is organized as follows: Chapter II begins with a definition of terrorism. It will also be shown that there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. The reasons for terrorism will be discussed. A terrorist profile will be developed by uncovering ideologies of terrorists. Terrorist organizations will be examined as a system in order to identify vulnerabilities to counter terrorism. Finally, psychological operations will be briefly examined to determine their utility for counterterrorism.

Chapter III will discuss psychological operations in detail. In order to influence terrorists and supporters of terrorist organizations, influence techniques will be examined. The psychological dimensions of conflict will be reviewed. Levels of psychological operations will be defined. In the end, the intelligence requirements of psychological operations will be established.

Chapter IV begins with the definition of intelligence and the various types of intelligence. Particular attention will be paid to the importance of intelligence and the difference between operational and psychological operations intelligence requirements. In terms of influencing individuals not to join terrorist organizations, cultural intelligence will be discussed. In the end, the intelligence requirements for conducting psychological operations will be identified.

Al-Qaeda is a transnational terrorist organization which must be disrupted and destroyed. Chapter V will analyze al-Qaeda in terms of psychological operations for countering it. This chapter will discuss al-Qaeda's ideology, strategy, member motivation, radicalization and recruitment processes, and organizational structure. Furthermore, the chapter will provide the author's point of view on the steps that have to be taken by world officials in order to prevent continuous recruitment and radicalization of peaceful populations by al-Qaeda and to deter its current members.

Chapter VI will contain the conclusion remarks of this thesis.

## II. TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

### A. INTRODUCTION

Some Hindus had brought an elephant for exhibition and placed it in a dark house. Crowds of people were going into that dark place to see the beast. Finding that ocular inspection was impossible, each visitor felt it with his palm in the darkness. The palm of one fell on the trunk ‘This creature is like a water-spout,’ he said. The hand of another lighted on the elephant’s ear. To him the beast was evidently like a fan. Another rubbed against its leg. ‘I found the elephant’s shape is like a pillar,’ he said. Another laid his hand on its back. ‘Certainly this elephant was like a throne,’ he said.<sup>5</sup>

Rumi 1207-1273

The terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon put terrorism in our daily life. Security inspections in airports and discussions about terrorism are examples of this infiltration. People around the world—in busses, on trains, and in shopping malls—became the potential victims of terrorist bombings.

Scholars all around the world have been trying to develop an exact and accepted definition of terrorism. However, since terrorism can be regarded as the elephant in the dark, there is no exact definition. Countries perceive and know terrorism according to their own contact with it, as in the elephant example. Although they see the same act, they interpret it according to their own experiences and prejudices. Therefore, one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. This chapter introduces the reader to terrorism and counterterrorism, describing these terms and examining the difficulty in defining what exactly terrorism is and the subsequent difficulty in countering it. The chapter also underlines the importance of recruitment prevention in order to undermine terrorist organizations. Finally, this chapter concludes with the idea that the use of psychological

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<sup>5</sup> Jalal al-Din Rumi, “Tales from Masnavi,” A. J. Arberry, trans., [http://www.khamush.com/tales\\_from\\_masnavi.htm#The%20Elephant](http://www.khamush.com/tales_from_masnavi.htm#The%20Elephant) (accessed October 5, 2008).

operations to influence population not to join terrorist organizations and deter foot soldiers of terrorist organizations from conducting attacks is essential for counterterrorism.

## **B. DEFINING TERRORISM**

Terrorism has always been hard to define. There are many different definitions of terrorism. Some scholars describe it as “the use of force or violence by individuals or groups that is directed toward civilian populations and intended to instill fear as a means of coercing individuals or groups to change their political and social positions.”<sup>6</sup>

The U.S. State Department uses the definition of terrorism contained in Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f(d) “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience,”<sup>7</sup> while the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of force or violence against a persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”<sup>8</sup> The U.S. Department of Defense also defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of—or threatened use of—force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political or ideological objectives.”<sup>9</sup>

Article 1 of the 1991 Anti-Terror Law of Turkey defines terrorism as: “any act committed by an individual or individuals belonging to an organization with a view to change the constitutionally determined characteristics of the Republic and the political, legal, social, secular, and economic order through oppression, violence, intimidation, or threat; to destroy the indivisible territorial and national integrity of the State or to

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<sup>6</sup> G. I. Wilson, *Terrorism: Psychology and Kinetics*, 6, [http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/pdf/wilson\\_psychology\\_of\\_terrorism.pdf](http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/pdf/wilson_psychology_of_terrorism.pdf) (accessed December 2, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 2001*, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2001/html/10220.htm> (accessed August 14, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> “Terrorist group” is not defined. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Terrorism in the United States 1999*, <http://www.fbi.gov/publications/terror/terror99.pdf> (accessed December 2, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (2002), 437.

endanger the existence of the Turkish State and Republic; to weaken or take over the state authority; to suppress the fundamental rights and freedoms; to disrupt the domestic or external security as well as public order and health; is an act of terror.”<sup>10</sup>

Alex P. Schmid cites 109 definitions of terrorism, in order to show the difficulty in determining a common definition in his book, *Political Terrorism*. He also lists the definitional elements according to their frequency mentioned in different definitions in descending order.<sup>11</sup>

Element	Frequency
Violence, force	83.5
Political	65
Threat	51
(Psych) effects and (anticipated) reactions	41.5
Method of combat, strategy, tactic	30.5
Extra normality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constraints	30
Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	28
Publicity aspect	21.5
Arbitrariness; impersonal, random character; indiscrimination	21
Civilians, noncombatants, neutral, outsiders as victims	17.5
Intimidation	17
Innocence of victims emphasized	15.5
Group, movement, organization as perpetrator	14
Symbolic aspect, demonstrators to others	13.5
Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence	9
Clandestine, covert nature	9
Repetitiveness; serial or campaign character of violence	7
Criminal	6
Demands made on third parties	4

Table 1. Frequency of Definitional Elements in 109 Scholarly Definitions of Terrorism

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<sup>10</sup> “Anti-Terror Law No 3713,” *Official Gazette*, 30 no. 20843 (April 12, 1991), in Beril Dedeoglu, “Bermuda Triangle: Comparing Official Definitions of Terrorist Activity,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15 (2004): 100.

<sup>11</sup> Alex P. Schmid and Albert Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Databases, Theories, & Literature* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 36.

By using these definitional elements, he proposes a broad definition of terrorism:

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individuals, groups, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between the terrorist (organization), the (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audiences), turning them into a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.<sup>12</sup>

All of these definitions show us that every country or individual defines terrorism according to their own unique concerns. These definitions demonstrate how people perceive terrorism and what measures they should apply to counter it.

### **C. WHO BECOMES A TERRORIST? THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM**

A terrorist is an individual who chooses terrorism as a means to accomplish his/her ends. In order to understand why people employ terrorism or join terrorist organizations, authorities must comprehend the psychology behind terrorism. There is not an exact profile of a terrorist. Every individual or terrorist organization has its own motivations, ideologies, and causes to join terrorist organizations and employ terrorism.

In the literature, misconception about terrorists is a frequent mistake made by academics. Even though poverty is accepted as one of the most popular explanations of terrorism, Mark Sageman claims that the vast majority of terrorists come from the middle class, which proves that poverty is not the major cause of terrorism. In his book, *Leaderless Jihad*, he clarifies other misconceptions about the accepted profile of a terrorist. He attests that they are not brainwashed by their religion, families, or cultures; they are not immature and ignorant; they have families and job responsibilities—

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<sup>12</sup> Schmid and Jongman, *Political Terrorism: a New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Databases, Theories, & Literature*, 39.

contrary to what is believed.<sup>13</sup> These misconceptions prove that terrorists and terrorist organizations may have different motivations, ideologies, and beliefs, which make them difficult to comprehend. Although it differs from one individual to another, there are some common characteristics of individuals who join terrorist organizations.

## 1. Motivations of Terrorists

Some scholars argue that a person who is frustrated by the gap between the expectations of his needs being met and the satisfaction of his needs actually being met might lead to aggression.<sup>14</sup> Even though empirical evidence does not support this argument, the “frustration-aggression” model has been used to explain the reasons for terrorist actions for decades.<sup>15</sup> Some scholars argue that some individuals need a scapegoat “to blame for their own inadequacies and weaknesses;”<sup>16</sup> hence, those individuals who could be defined as mentally ill might define their environment as “us” and “them.”<sup>17</sup> Eventually, in the literature, there are several approaches and theories which try to explain what leads individuals to violence. However, some common motivations could be found in terrorists’ profiles.

The motives behind terrorism could be another aspect to be defined in order to understand the psychology of terrorism. Motive can be defined as “an emotion, desire, physiological need, or similar impulse that acts as an incitement to action.”<sup>18</sup> One’s motivation for engaging in terrorism is often presumed to be the cause of the group and this motivation can change over time according to the objectives of the group. Many

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<sup>13</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 200.

<sup>14</sup> Rex A. Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” *The Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C. September, 1999), 19.

<sup>15</sup> Randy Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism* (Tampa, University of South Florida, 2004), 12.

<sup>16</sup> Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 24.

academics argue that terrorism may have more than one incentive, including psychological, economic, political, religious, and sociological motivations,<sup>19</sup> and these incentives may intertwine.

As psychological incentives, Martha Crenshaw suggests that there are at least four categories of motivation among terrorists: (1) the opportunity for action, (2) the need to belong, (3) the desire for social status, and (4) the acquisition of material reward.<sup>20</sup> Injustice, identity, and belonging could be perceived as main themes in terms of motivation of terrorists.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, it is argued that abuse in early childhood life could be one of the common themes accepted as a cause for individuals who apply violence.<sup>22</sup> Those themes also relate to one's potential openness or vulnerability to join terrorist organizations. Firstly, injustice is a cause for terrorism, since the common response to a grievance could be an aggression; secondly, becoming a part of a group and adopting their incentives and goals as if they were one's own, could be used to validate one's psychological identity; finally, perceiving a group as one's family could satisfy one of the individuals' psychological needs, namely, the need of belonging to an entity.

Furthermore, terrorism could be seen as a means to solve political and sociological disputes, such as “ethnic conflicts, religious and ideological conflicts, poverty, modernization stresses, political inequities, lack of peaceful communications channels, traditions of violence, the existence of a revolutionary group, governmental weakness and ineptness, erosions of confidence in regime, and deep divisions within governing elites and leadership groups.”<sup>23</sup> In addition, it is argued that “lack of economic opportunity and recessionary economies are positively related to terrorism.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” 15.

<sup>20</sup> Martha Crenshaw, An Organizational Approach to the Analysis of Political Terrorism *Orbis*, 29 no. 3 (1985): 465-489.

<sup>21</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, “The Quality of Terror,” *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3, (July 2005): 515.

## 2. Ideology of Terrorists

Another dimension, which could be argued as a cause for some individuals to use terrorism as a weapon and as an incentive for their justification, is ideology. Ideology could be seen as a tool by individuals to establish linkage between their actions and their justification.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, ideology could provide terrorists with a standing point for their violent actions; in addition, ideology could give the terrorist objectives to be achieved; and finally, ideology could regulate terrorist organizations' behaviors to maintain consistency in terms of uniformity of actions and arguments of organization.<sup>26</sup> Eventually, ideology could be used as a clarification to organize the group in terms of establishing a bridge between ends and means.

Other than ideology, terrorists use some techniques to justify their violent actions such as “outside-in” and “inside-out” effects.<sup>27</sup> One of the outside-in effects is perceiving oneself as waging war against a common ‘evil’; another is blaming the leader or the terrorist group itself to displace the responsibility.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, there are “inside-out effects that refer to blame victims, disregard the negative ramifications of their actions, and dehumanize victims.”<sup>29</sup> Consequently, terrorists use some techniques both to mitigate the ramifications of their actions and to justify them.

## 3. Goals and Strategies of Terrorist Organizations

Effective counterstrategies require an understanding of the strategic logic that drives terrorist violence. Terrorism works not only because it causes governments and individuals to respond in ways that aid the terrorists’ cause, but simply because it instills fear in target populations. Although the ultimate goals of terrorists or organizations have varied over time, there are five general types of goals defined by scholars in the literature. These types of goals are regime change, territorial change, policy change, social control,

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<sup>25</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 28.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>28</sup> Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” 39.

<sup>29</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 51.

and status quo maintenance. Regime change is the overthrow of a government and the replacement of a government with one led by the terrorists—or at least one more to their liking. Territorial change is taking territory away from a state to establish a new state or to join another state. Policy change refers to a broader category of lesser demands. Status quo maintenance is the support of an existing regime or territorial arrangement against political groups that seek to change it. Finally, social control means the control over the behavior of individuals, rather than the state.<sup>30</sup>

As discussed by H. Richard Yarger, for a state, strategy is all about how (way or concept) leadership will use the power (means or resources) available to the state to exercise control over sets of circumstances and geographic locations to achieve objectives (ends) that support state interests.<sup>31</sup> Terrorist organizations also have strategies in order to achieve their ultimate goals (discussed above). There are five strategies used by terrorist organizations in order to influence and persuade their enemy: (1) attrition, (2) intimidation, (3) provocation, (4) spoiling, and (5) outbidding.

Attrition refers to the strategy which persuades an enemy that the terrorists are strong enough to impose considerable costs if the enemy follows a particular policy. Intimidation consists of sending messages that the terrorists are strong enough to punish disobedience and that the government is too weak to stop them, so that people behave as the terrorists wish them to behave. Provocation refers to the attempt to induce the government to respond to terrorism with indiscriminate violence, which causes the population to be radicalized and support terrorists. In the strategy of spoiling, terrorists show the state as weak, untrustworthy, and the one who undermines attempts to reach a peace settlement. Finally, the outbidding strategy aims to persuade the public by violence that terrorists have greater resolve to fight the enemy than do rival groups; therefore, they

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<sup>30</sup> Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, *The Strategies of Terrorism*, International Security 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 52.

<sup>31</sup> Yarger, *Towards a Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model*, 2.

are worthy of support.<sup>32</sup> Understanding these five distinct strategic logics is crucial not only for comprehending terrorism but also for designing effective counterterrorism policies.

#### **D. HOW DO INDIVIDUALS BECOME TERRORISTS? THE RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESSES**

Terrorist recruitment is a crucial factor for terrorist organizations to survive. Without recruiting new members from the population, terrorist organizations do not have the ability to conduct attacks, which are essential to their survival, and over time, they may disappear. However, individuals do not join terrorist organizations. They intentionally are exposed to a radicalization process by terrorist organizations in order to recruit them.

##### **1. Radicalization Process**

The process of radicalization could have more than one motive. These motivations can be considered the beginning of radicalization process. The first group of people who join a terrorist organization could be unemployed and ones ousted from their societies. The second group could be adventure-seeking individuals. The third group comprises of more educated people, who perceive some specific political grievances as a valid incentive. The final group could be motivated by intellectual and ideological reasons, such as religion, regime change, and nationalism.<sup>33</sup> Some scholars argue, “the process begins by framing some unsatisfying event or condition as being just. The injustice is blamed on a target policy, person, or a nation. The responsible party, perceived as a threat, is then vilified—often demonized—which facilitates justification for aggression.”<sup>34</sup> Eventually, there is logic behind the pathway of radicalization, which leads to violence.

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<sup>32</sup> Kydd and Walter, *The strategies of Terrorism*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” 24.

<sup>34</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 28.

Social and operational observations of numerous terrorist and extremist groups showed that becoming a terrorist or recruitment process is not a discrete choice to change status. Horgan and Taylor argue that most involvement in terrorism results from gradual exposure and socialization towards extreme behavior.<sup>35</sup> Mark Sageman also argues that joining a terrorist organization requires subsequent stages of radicalization.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it could be concluded that individuals do not instantly become terrorists; rather, there are some processes and/or pathways, which lead individuals to become radicalized and join a terrorist organization.

Psychologist Eric D. Shaw provides a model that he calls “The Personal Pathway Model,” through which terrorists become radicalized and enter their new profession. The pathway comprises many stages such as “socialization processes; narcissistic injuries; escalatory events, particularly confrontation with police; and personal connections to terrorist group members.”<sup>37</sup> He suggests that terrorists come from a selected population who suffered from damage to their self-esteem in early life stages. Although their political views and activities may be consistent with the “liberal social philosophies” of their families, they sometimes are moved beyond beliefs to social action. Terrorists are sensitized because of the economic and political tensions throughout modern society.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the acts of law enforcement forces provoke these people to join a group as a psychosocial identity. In the end, they become radicalized and join terrorist organizations.

Although the radicalization process may change according to different terrorist organizations, there are many similar points in the radicalization process. In the religious radicalization process, Mark Sageman notes that the expatriate individuals generally are inclined to join terrorist organizations since they feel alienated from the population in which they live. Another point is that the global Islamist terrorism social movement is based to a great degree on friendship and kinship. The friendship process includes two

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<sup>35</sup> J. Horgan and M. Taylor, *The Making of a Terrorist*, Jane’s Intelligence Review, 13 no. 12 (2001): 16-18.

<sup>36</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, 25-45.

<sup>37</sup> Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” 24.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

aspects: the first one is the collective decision of a group to join a terrorist organization and the second one is to join one's childhood friends who have already joined terrorist organizations. He describes the radicalization process within four stages: the moral outrage of individuals, which refers to the strong motivational effects of hearing about or watching suffering fellow Muslims; the moral universe, which refers to the idea that there is a war against Islam in the world; resonance with the personal experiences; and the mobilization by a network, which refers to guidance of terrorist organizations.<sup>39</sup>

This radicalization process may also be relevant for other terrorist organizations such as Hamas, the PKK, and other national, secular terrorist organizations, since individuals from strict Islamic backgrounds were more likely to join Islamist groups, while those with no religious background might join either a secular or a religious group. For instance, the PKK members are also exposed to a similar process by the PKK. The PKK provides most of its recruitment by using social settings, kinship, and friendship in the Turkish population.

## **2. Recruitment Processes**

In order to defeat an enemy, it is very important to broadly analyze and understand your enemy. Furthermore, it could be crucial to know what resources the enemy uses, how those resources are obtained, and which strategies, tactics, and techniques are used to obtain these resources. If a country succeeds in interrupting the flow of resources into the enemy organization, it will probably be successful in defeating its enemy. Therefore, learning terrorist organizations' methods of recruiting new members is also a significant step for destroying terrorist organizations.

Before explaining recruitment processes used by terrorist organizations, it must be emphasized that the recruitment process is the stage immediately following the radicalization process. Radicalization is the mental prerequisite to recruitment. Brian Michael Jenkins asserts that while radicalization includes "internalizing a set of beliefs, a militant mindset that embraces violent jihad as the paramount test of one's conviction,"

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<sup>39</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, 200.

recruitment is turning others or transforming oneself into a weapon of a terrorist organization. In short, recruitment means going operational.<sup>40</sup> However, it could be argued that in the recruitment process, individuals also continue to be radicalized because they are imposed or propagated with ideology of the terrorist organization.

Terrorist organizations use different recruitment processes. The specific characterization of any recruitment process may be referred to as its shape. The shape is a combination of the overall recruitment pattern and specific descriptors. In order to counter recruitment, interventions should be matched to patterns and descriptors. Although there are a great variety of recruitment processes that might be used by terrorist organizations, a review of literature reveals a few common structures. Ultimately, there are four approaches used by terrorist organizations to disseminate their messages to targeted populations, namely the net approach, the funnel approach, the infection approach, and the seed crystal approach.<sup>41</sup>

In the net approach, a terrorist organization targets the whole community equally. Since the community is considered to be homogenous and receptive enough to be approached, the messages are delivered individually to every member of the community by the recruiter. While some members respond positively and others may respond negatively, the whole population is viewed as ready for recruitment. This approach is used when there is little serious opposition in the community. Among the key variables to be investigated in this approach are the geography (Where is the net cast?) and demographic-psychographic similarities and contrast among the targeted population. (Who is caught? Who slips out of the net?)<sup>42</sup>

If the targeted community is ripe for recruitment but needs transformation in identity and motivation, the funnel approach is employed by terrorist organizations. This approach is required to use an incremental pattern in order to recruit members of the

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<sup>40</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, *Building an Army of Believers: Jihadist Radicalization and Recruitment*, Rand Document, April 5, 2007, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Scott Gerwehr, and Sara Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, RAND document, [http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2006/RAND\\_RP1214.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2006/RAND_RP1214.pdf) (accessed December 2, 2008), 76.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

population. Potential recruits start the process at one side and are transformed into dedicated group members when they emerge at the other side of the funnel. Hazing rituals and group identity-building exercises are the significant characteristics of this approach. The funnel approach requires a broad knowledge of cognitive, social and clinical psychology in order to implement the process.<sup>43</sup>

If the population in the target is so limited in accepting foreign ideas, the infection approach is used for recruitment. An agent can be inserted into the targeted community to rally potential recruits. In the early stages of this approach, this method of recruiting suits groups that are actively opposed by government, lending itself to secrecy and operational security. As recruits rally, the effort for recruiting grows. The significant variable that must be considered in this type of recruitment is time. The infection approach is likely to be the most suitable approach for a terrorist organization which tries to influence a police or military organization.<sup>44</sup>

Generally, in the seed crystal approach, a targeted population is so inaccessible that a trusted agent cannot be inserted into the population. However, in this case, recruiters may seek to provide a context for self-recruitment. In self-recruitment process, individuals are influenced by incidents around him. Individuals get the basic motivation for joining terrorist organization. Once an individual emerges in the population as a new recruit, terrorist organizations begin to follow the infection approach. How long environmental manipulation must be applied in order to produce self-recruitment has a significant role in this approach. The seed crystal approach may be the most successful in populations where open recruiting is difficult or impossible.<sup>45</sup>

As indicated above, terrorist organizations use these approaches in order to broadcast their message into the population. To spread their message, they use some persuasive instruments, which can be analyzed in two categories: direct and indirect instruments.<sup>46</sup> While direct instruments consist of face-to-face invitations, indirect

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<sup>43</sup> Gerwehr, and Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, 77.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 80.

instruments include political pronouncements posted in a mosque, by media, or on a web site. Terrorist organizations make use of sermons, rumors, education, and training sessions in mosques and camps for direct interactions with recruits. They also make use of mass media such as newspapers, radio, television, and the web to spread their ideology for indirect interactions.

These instruments are used accordingly with the aforementioned approaches. While direct and indirect instruments can be used together in the net approach, terrorist organizations must use indirect instruments in the early stages of the seed crystal approach in order to protect themselves from subversion in the country. On the other hand, direct instruments may be more useful in the funnel and infection approaches than in the net approach.

Group psychology is another key aspect for recruitment of individuals to terrorist organizations. An individual's transformation into a terrorist takes place within the structure of the terrorist group with a political or religious agenda. Within this group, terrorists get the feeling of self-importance, a sense of belonging, and a new belief system, which make them believe that terrorist acts are acceptable and that the group's goals are important. After getting into the group, individuals are required to make some commitments to Scott Gerwehr, Sara Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, rove their faith, devotion, and obedience. In time, individuals must make some commitment though actions in order to satisfy other group members and stay inside the group. In the end, the individual becomes a member of the terrorist organization.

### **3. The Internet**

One of the significant indirect instruments used by terrorist organizations is the Internet. Use of the Internet has varied over time. Although every terrorist organization uses the Internet for different purposes, there are many similarities among these uses. Almost every terrorist organization uses the Internet for these purposes: “as a force-multiplier in facilitating, shaping, and disseminating political propaganda (and ‘uncensored’ disinformation campaigns and decoy sites); in recruitment (tapping into a broad sympathizer base far beyond their natural ethnic or religious constituency);

financing; in facilitating and controlling intra- and inter-group communication and coordination; information and intelligence gathering; stealth and anonymity in both routine activity and tactical operations; and ease of operations that are ‘cost-effective’ both in terms of resources expended and as a ‘force-multiplier’ in their ability to strike worldwide.”<sup>47</sup>

The Internet has become one of the key elements in radicalization and recruitment of members. Individuals, who are exposed to suffering scenes of their fellows, become radicalized; and then they are recruited by terrorist organizations via message boards on the Internet. The volunteer and recruiter meet at the message board on the Internet. The volunteer then is subjected to a confidence exam. Passing the exam results in getting accepted into the terrorist organization. As an example, a message was posted by a jihadist on a website looking for volunteers for a jihad on March 17, 2005. The message also contained the skill list in order to be a mujahedeen fighter: loyalty, explosives expertise, and intelligence information. In addition, the terrorist invited people “who know how to draw up [sketch] plans,” for the jihad and wants them to “send [him] a map of [their] town in a special [private] message and give the places where the Americans, the Israelis, the Jews, or the Christians are located.”<sup>48</sup>

## **E. COUNTERTERRORISM**

Terrorism is a tool or method for terrorists in order to attain their political, social demands and reach their ultimate goals. As discussed above, terrorists have different kinds of motivations, beliefs, and ideologies; likewise, terrorist organizations have different radicalization and recruitment processes. Therefore, it may be argued that counterterrorism cannot be a single policy, but must have several elements. In order to

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<sup>47</sup> Peter Flemming and Michael Stohl, “Myths and Realities of Cyberterrorism,” in *Countering Terrorism through International Cooperation*. Proceedings of the International Conference held in Courmayeur Mont Blanc, Italy, September 22-24, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> SITE Institute, “Jihad Registration Message Posted on the Internet,” March 17 2005, <http://siteinstitute.org/bin/articles.cgi?ID=publications27405&Category=publications&Subcategory=0> (accessed on October 24, 2008).

understand terrorist organizations and build effective counter-strategies to prevent attacks, or at least reduce the frequency and severity of terrorism, one should examine terrorist organizations as an open system.

## 1. Open System Theory

Open System Theory was first proposed under the name “General System Theory” by the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy. However, Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn were the ones who first introduced it as “Open System Theory” in their seminal work, the *Social Psychology of Organizations*. Hitherto, the open system theory has been used for old limited structural approaches.

According to Open System Theory, a system is an arrangement of interrelated parts. Systems are dependent upon their external environment in order to survive, and therefore are open to influences and transactions with the outside world as long as they exist. This interaction has two components: input (i.e., what enters the system from the outside) and output (i.e., what leaves the system and goes into the environment). In order to speak about the inside and the outside of a system, we need to be able to distinguish between the system itself and its environment. A system and its environment are in general separated by a boundary.<sup>49</sup> In the case that a system does not interact with its environment, it starts to destroy itself because it is inherently exposed to entropy, which means the tendency for systems to move forward to a chaotic or random state. As long as a system adapts itself to its environment, shapes its environment, or finds a favorable environment in which it can operate, it survives and operates successfully and effectively. Examination of systems reveals the following basic characteristics of systems:

- They import energy and resources from the environment (input)
- They transform this energy and resources (throughput)
- They export a product to the environment (output)

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<sup>49</sup> C. Heylighen, “Basic Concepts of the Systems Approach,” in: F. Heylighen, C. Joslyn and V. Turchin eds. *Principia Cybernetica Web* (Principia Cybernetica, Brussels, 1998), <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/sysappr.html> accessed September 22, 2008.

- They adapt their components in a dynamic pattern of activities (feedback)<sup>50</sup>

## 2. Terrorist Organizations as Systems

Examining terrorist organizations as systems helps us to understand every aspect of them in order to build effective strategies to counter them. Like other organizations in the world, a terrorist organization is a system that needs inputs—obtained from either internal or external sources—to be converted into certain outputs or activities. A terrorist organization needs inputs of recruits, information, shelter, and weapons, usually obtained from the internal environment; and cadres, publicity, material, and initial financing, often provided from external sources.<sup>51</sup>

After acquiring the inputs indicated above, terrorist organizations convert these into outputs. As with many other organizations, terrorist organizations organize personnel, financial, logistics, information, communications, and operations branches to manage the conversion of inputs into activities. The terrorists use a wide range of incentives (recognition, reward, promotion) and penalties (criticism, isolation, demotion, and physical punishment) to spur the operations between the branches.<sup>52</sup> In the conversion mechanism, the time and organizational structure that a terrorist organization needs to emerge, grow, organize, and execute the operations become the vital issues.

The outputs or activities of terrorist organizations include sabotage, attacks on individuals, assassinations of distinguished persons in the society, public demonstrations, small-scale attacks, and eventually larger attacks and mobile warfare on the military side.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Erdogan Celebi, “Systems Approach to Terrorism: Countering the Terrorist Training Subsystem,” Naval Postgraduate School, 2006, <http://bosun.nps.edu/uhtbin/hyperion-image.exe/06Dec%5FCelebi.pdf> (1.16 MB); <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA462342> (accessed March 11, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, (RAND, 1970), 28-46.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Even though many terrorist organizations are not organized or structured like a legitimate organization, they have a structure consisting of a leader cadre and foot soldiers. While the leader cadre forms the ideological and strategic side of terrorist organizations, foot soldiers constitute the operational and tactical side of terrorist organizations. The number of foot soldiers is greater than leader cadre's number and this make it difficult for the leader cadre to check their motivation level and ideology knowledge. Although the leader cadres generally remain the same in the organization, foot soldiers usually change due to various reasons. The leader cadre is very radicalized, bound to the terrorist organization, strict about their beliefs and the organization's ideology. On the other hand, foot soldiers generally are not fully radicalized or totally loyal to the terrorist organization. It may be argued that foot soldiers may be suspicious about the ideologies, goals, and strategies of a terrorist organization.

In order to counter terrorism, this ongoing system must be disrupted with the employment of political, social, and military sanctions. As suggested by Nathan Leites, the first thing to do is to "raise the cost to terrorist organizations of obtaining inputs, or reduce the inputs obtained for given costs," which aims to deny inputs. The second is to slow down the processes by which terrorist organizations convert these inputs into activities, which means to reduce the efficiency of terrorist organizations' production processes. Destroying or preventing outputs forms the third strategy. Finally, the fourth measure is to blunt the effects of terrorist organizations' outputs on the population.<sup>54</sup>

Nathan Leites defines the first two methods as "counterproduction," which prevents terrorist organizations' production of activities by either denying inputs or changing the production coefficients so that smaller outputs are generated from given inputs. The third method is a traditional counterforce role of military action, and the fourth method is analogous to passive and active defense in strategic analysis.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore, in order to disrupt a terrorist organization system, the first two things that must be done are to prevent terrorist organizations from getting inputs and sever the

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<sup>54</sup> Leites and Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, 36.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

support of the target population. In this regard, terrorist organizations' recruitment processes, which are crucial to their survival, must be disrupted. Influencing populations not to join terrorist organizations becomes the initial aspect of this strategy. Since terrorism is much more about the psychology of individuals, psychological operations can be used for influencing individuals not to join terrorist organizations, thereby severing the support of populations to terrorist organizations.

Another aspect of countering terrorism is preventing the outputs of terrorist organizations, or at least to reduce the frequency of terrorism. This can be done by military measures; however, the cost of military operations and losses in the operations becomes the vital concern in this strategy. Therefore, psychological operations can be considered as a nonlethal military measure to interrupt terrorist organizational systems. In this strategy, since they are not fully radicalized, the foot soldiers of terrorist organizations become the target audience to be influenced and deterred.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon to the world, yet it remains difficult to define and counter it. Terrorism has been explained in various ways, from the political level to the psychological level. It is also difficult to profile a terrorist; however, it may be concluded from the discussions above that a general terrorist could be defined as a male in his twenties, single and belonging to the middle class; in addition, he is educated and participating in working class advocacy groups.<sup>56</sup> In short, it could be very hard to differentiate an average person from a prospective terrorist, since the profile of the terrorist is not very distinctive. Every terrorist has his/her own motivations and beliefs to join a terrorist organization. On the other hand, every terrorist organization has its own ideologies, goals, strategies, and radicalization and recruitment processes in order to influence populations and get support.

Countering terrorism and terrorist organizations requires several measures that must be taken at the same time. Examinations of terrorist organizations as a system help

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<sup>56</sup> Wilson, *Terrorism: Psychology and Kinetics*, 10.

us to understand the mechanics of them and develop counter-strategies. As open systems, terrorist organizations require inputs—recruits, money, weapons, etc.—and convert these inputs to outputs—attacks, sabotage, assassinations, etc. Countering terrorist organizations requires the prevention of inputs, such as new recruits. Other strategies include measures to reduce the outputs by influencing foot soldiers of terrorist organizations. Psychological operations as nonlethal military operations can be used to influence populations not to join terrorist organizations and manipulate foot soldiers of terrorist organizations to back down their attacks, thereby severing their support.

### **III. INFLUENCE THEORIES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Every war that has been waged in the world so far is believed to have had a psychological dimension. Whoever can exploit and take advantage of it wins the battles, or at least has less loss in the battles. The Global War on Terror, since terror is all about the psychology of individuals, also has a psychological dimension that can be exploited in order to be successful.

With their standard exercise, psychological operations decrease the motivation and combat efficiency of an enemy and cause dissidence and disaffection within the enemy's ranks. Moreover, psychological operations may create resistance within a population against a hostile regime as well as against a terrorist organization. In this regard, psychological operations can be used as nonlethal military operations with the employment of social, economic, and political sanctions over a population who are favorable to terrorists, or over the foot soldiers of terrorist organizations. Psychological operations can deter terrorists, disrupt and destroy a terrorist organization's activities, and influence the population to sever the support it gives to the terrorist organization.

Since psychological operations are related to influencing a population or individuals, influence theories must be comprehended as a prerequisite to understanding psychological operations. These techniques can be used in psychological operations in order to influence a target population and achieve desired behaviors.

#### **B. INFLUENCE THEORIES**

In general, an individual influences another individual to have something done when other circumstances occur. Influence refers to a relation and linkage between two individuals, one having power over the other. Academics define influence in different ways. Influence, as defined by Jeffrey Pfeffer, is the power to change the course of events; to overcome resistance and to get people to do things that they would not

normally do.<sup>57</sup> This power can be categorized as reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power. He asserts that each power category has its own influence tactics and processes for a targeted population. Bob Cialdini defines influence as a process and summarizes it in six principles: reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Anthony R. Pratkanis describes social influence as the processes of “conformity (creating or changing behavior or belief to match the response of others), persuasion or attitude change, (change in response to a message, discourse, or communication), compliance (change in response to an explicit request), yielding to social forces (change in response to the structure of the social situation), or helping (change in response to someone’s need).”<sup>59</sup>

## 1. Cialdini’s Six Principles

Reciprocation is the most used influence principle within a social population. In simplest terms, it is the same concept as tit-for-tat: I give something to you, so you must give something to me or I do a favor for you, so you should do another favor for me. This principle is the consequence of a networked society. From the beginning of history, individuals have the basic instinct to repay whatever they get from other people, even more than they get. Reciprocation can be raised from unwanted object; however, the probability of reciprocation increases if the object is desired or needed by the other side. Another point about reciprocation is that concessions, as well as goods and services, can be reciprocated, since individuals also have the psychological stimulation to repay others’ compromises.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1992), 391.

<sup>58</sup> Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, Rev. ed. (New York: Morrow, 1993), 320.

<sup>59</sup> A. R. Pratkanis, ed., *The Science of Social Influence: Advances and Future Progress* (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>60</sup> Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, 17-57.

The commitment and consistency principle stems from personal and interpersonal pressure. According to this principle, individuals behave in accordance with their previous decisions and they will be consistent with things they say and they do. They will be trustworthy.<sup>61</sup>

Another influence principle discussed by Cialdini is social proof, which refers to other peoples' behavior. The principle asserts that what other people think or do is the correct behavior. We view a behavior as more correct in a situation to the degree that we see other people performing it.<sup>62</sup>

In our lives, there are many individuals who have authority on various subjects. These authorities make many of our decisions for us when we confront unfamiliar situations. People will tend to obey authority figures, even they are asked to do objectionable acts. Authority can be used during a negotiation. If the requester has some sort of authority regarding the subject, the probability that a request is accepted increases.<sup>63</sup>

People are persuaded easily by other people they like. In literature, there are many variables of how much a person is liked, such as physical attractiveness, the influencer's professional background, and similarity in the area of opinions, personality traits, background, or lifestyle. Moreover, familiarity also plays a big role in influencing other individuals.<sup>64</sup>

The last influence principle introduced by Cialdini is scarcity. Making something scarce is the easiest way to increase its desirability. As an influence principle, scarcity can be used when a time or number limit on an offer is put. If there is a limited supply of something, demand increases, which causes an increase in the value of the thing.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, 57-114.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 114-167.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 208-237.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 167-208.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 237- 273.

These principles can be embedded into psychological operations in order to influence targets as well as a ground force actions.

## 2. Pratkanis' Social Influence Analysis

The process of influence may be regarded as communication between two people; a source disseminates its message to a receiver by using some communication channels to change its behavior. Therefore, for convenience, Pratkanis divides the tactics into four categories, which correspond to four main tasks of a communicator: “(a) establish a favorable climate for the influence attempt (landscaping or pre-persuasion), (b) create a relationship with the audience (source credibility), (c) present the message in a convincing fashion, and (d) use the emotions to persuade.”<sup>66</sup> These task categories will be useful for developing strategies to influence individuals not to join terrorist organizations.

### a. *Landscaping (Pre-Persuasion) Tactics*

Landscaping (or pre-persuasion) refers to presenting “a situation in such a way that the target is likely to be receptive to a given course of action and respond in a desired manner.”<sup>67</sup> How the situation is defined, how the problem is presented, and how a request is requested are the important points that must be considered. Landscaping comprises many tactics:

- Define and label an issue in a favorable manner
- Association
- Change the meaning of an object category
- Set expectations
- Limit and control the number of choices and options
- Valence framing
- Control the range and meaning of a response
- Set the decision criteria

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<sup>66</sup> Pratkanis, ed., *The Science of Social Influence: Advances and Future Progress*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

- Agenda setting: determining what issues will be discussed
- Decoys
- Phantoms
- Establish a favorable comparison point or set
- Control the flow of information
- Metaphor
- Story-telling
- (Mis)Leading Questions
- Perspective and point-of-view
- Control the procedures for making a decision

***b. Tactics that Rely on Social Relationships: Source Credibility and Social Roles***

Another important ingredient of influence is the reliability or credibility of the communicator. Research shows that establishment of a social relationship facilitates influence between the source and target of influence. In addition, there are a number of cases where sources with differing basis of credibility produce differential persuasion under varying treatments. In order to account for these cases, Pratkanis proposes an altercasting theory of source credibility as an extension of the hypothesis that credibility is a function of the nature of the social relationship between source and recipient. According to an altercasting theory, source credibility is a function of the roles taken by the source and recipient of a message. The following tactics describe how this can be accomplished, and in the process, explore the nature of relationships that promote and deter persuasion.<sup>68</sup>

- Be a credible source
- Tact altercast
- Authority-agent altercast
- Expert-unknowing public altercast
- High status-admirer altercast

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<sup>68</sup> Pratkanis ed., *The Science of Social Influence: Advances and Future Progress*, 18.

- Physically attractive-admirer altercast
- Just plain folks: Similarity altercast
- Associative casting and avoidant miscasting
- Intimates (friends and lovers) altercast
- Dependency-responsibility altercast
- Social consensus (bandwagon)
- Fleeting interactions

*c. Effective Message Tactics*

Since influence processes may be regarded as communication, the message disseminated to the targets is very important in terms of effectiveness. According to research, an effective persuasive message is one that focuses the targets' attention and cognitive activity on exactly what the communicator wants them to think. "Inducing the target to think of reasons for a given action, making it appear that there are good reasons for an action, disrupting a person's ability to counter-argue, focusing attention on certain reasons, selecting the most powerful arguments, and delivering the message for best effect" are the tenets of an effective message.<sup>69</sup> These are the effective message tactics discussed by Pratkanis:

- Self-generated persuasion
- Imagery sells
- Omitting an explicit message conclusion
- Rhetorical questions
- Pique technique
- Message fit: Link the content of a message to the pre-existing beliefs, experiences, and knowledge of the recipient

*d. Emotional Tactics*

Emotions are generally considered to affect our rational thinking and better judgment. "An emotional appeal is one that uses the message recipient's subjective

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<sup>69</sup> Pratkanis ed., *The Science of Social Influence: Advances and Future Progress*, 29.

feelings, affect, arousal, emotions, and tension-states as the basis for securing influence.”<sup>70</sup> Since our emotions affect us deeply, individuals can exploit them.

The following tactics are used to allow a communicator to control the emotions of the target for desired effects. Arousing an emotion and then offering the target a way of responding to that emotion are the basic rules of these tactics.

- Fear appeals
- Guilt sells
- Embarrass the target of influence
- Jeer pressure
- Flattery (ingratiation)
- Empathy
- Norm of reciprocity
- Door-in-the-face (rejection-then-retreat)
- Commitment trap
- Foot-in-the-door
- Low-balling
- Bait-and-switch
- Counter attitudinal advocacy with insufficient justification
- Over-justification of an intrinsic activity
- Effort justification
- Hypocrisy reduction
- Self-prophecy
- Self-affirmation
- Scarcity
- Psychological reactance
- Evocation of freedom
- Positive happy mood

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<sup>70</sup> Pratkanis ed., *The Science of Social Influence: Advances and Future Progress*, 43.

## C. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Psychological operations should be considered as a crucial military element to influence populations with the employment of political, social, and economic sanctions, since every conflict has psychological dimensions. The perceptions of other countries and populations play a significant role in deterring them from implementing some actions against allied forces. Psychological operations, as defined in the *U.S. Army Field Manual 3-05-301*, are “planned operations that convey selected information and indicators to foreign target audiences (TAs) to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately, the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.”<sup>71</sup> As mentioned earlier, although every conflict has a psychological dimension, psychological operations must be planned actions. They must target a population to influence them and, consequently, get the desired behaviors. The psychological effects of other operations cannot be categorized as psychological operations since they are not intentionally planned and executed. However, the psychological effects of other operations may cause some desired reactions against troops on the ground.

### 1. The Importance of Psychological Operations

To fight and conquer in all battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.<sup>72</sup>

Sun Tzu

An adversary’s will can be broken in a number of ways: by application of military force, by economic sanctions, by loss of external support, and by military defections.<sup>73</sup> As Sun Tzu asserts, victory is not gained on the battlefield; rather, victory is determined by which side has influence over the other side’s decisions and actions. This judgment

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<sup>71</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 439.

<sup>72</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War, by Lionel Giles, 1910, <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/20594> (accessed October 21, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> Richard Stilwell, “Political-Psychological Dimension of Counterinsurgency,” in *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies* ed. Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley, (Alabama: Air University Press, 1996), 319.

inserts a psychological dimension into the conflict. A state has diplomatic, information, military, and economic instruments of power that enhance, when employed properly in concert, a state's ability to influence and impact a target audience's decision-making process. It is understood that using force to coerce behavior change is crude and inefficient and adds other problems. Ideas and perceptions of others must be the key points to influence decision-makers in this rapidly changing world. Therefore, ideas must be conveyed in such a way that the receiver gets the message and acts favorably according to the sender's objectives.<sup>74</sup>

This mission gives psychological operations a significant role in the exercise of instruments of national power. Psychological operations increase the effectiveness of these instruments. The purpose of implementing psychological operations is to influence neutral, friendly, or hostile populations and groups and get desired emotions, attitudes, and behavior that support the implementation of national objectives and military operations at all levels—strategic, operational, and tactical. Therefore, decision-makers lose their ability to govern or command, the will to obey or fight, and the will to support.<sup>75</sup> Psychological operations can save lives of friendly forces. By lowering adversary morale and reducing their efficiency, psychological operations can also prevent aggressive actions and create dissidence and disaffection within enemies' ranks, ultimately inducing surrender. Ron Schleifer emphasizes the importance of psychological operations by asserting that "it [psychological operations] aims at stopping the enemy soldiers from acting like automated killing machines and start them thinking again, about their homes, their family, and life in general. Above all, it encourages them to think in moral terms while, at the same time, prompting strong feelings of guilt, all in order to weaken the enemy soldiers' resolve, diminish their will to fight, and undermine their ability to wound or take lives; in sum, destroy their effectiveness as soldiers."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Lee-Volker Cox, *Planning for Psychological Operations: A Proposal* (Air Command and Staff College, March 1997), 7.

<sup>75</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 439.

<sup>76</sup> Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29 no. 1-19 (2006): 3.

Psychological operations can be divided into three basic components:

- Target audiences
- Messages and themes
- Channels of communication

Target audiences of psychological operations can also be examined in three categories: the home audience, the enemy audience, and the neutrals. In times of war, a government tries to mobilize all the state's resources, which requires a huge sacrifice on the part of the population. The government must convince the population that the war is worth making. Thus, the home audience becomes the first and most important audience in psychological operations. The second audience is the enemy audience, who must be convinced that the war they are waging has no chance of being won and that the cause is hopeless and lost; therefore, the quicker the war is over, the better. Neutral countries, organizations, populations, and individuals comprise the neutral audience of psychological operations. Though they are not involved in the conflict, they must be influenced in order to have their support won, or at least to prevent them from supporting the enemy.<sup>77</sup>

The messages used in psychological operations are directed at a specific target audience and change according to the target audience. While the theme of demonizing the enemy is used in the messages for the home audience, neutral audiences are bombarded with the messages stressing justice and morality themes. On the other hand, enemy audiences are repeatedly told that they are waging a losing war.<sup>78</sup>

The messages of psychological operations can be delivered to target audiences in several ways. While the home audience is the most accessible, the enemy audience is difficult to penetrate. On the other hand, the neutral audience is medium accessible in

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<sup>77</sup> Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," 3.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

terms of reaching them.<sup>79</sup> In our century, psychological operations can utilize many communication assets to disseminate messages, such as radio, television, the internet, and written press.

## **2. The Levels of Psychological Operations**

Although psychological operations may be planned and executed separately from other military operations, they are usually combined with other military operations in order to increase the effectiveness of operations. They support joint, interagency, multinational, conventional, and special operations forces by providing strategic, operational, and tactical support to a theater combatant commander at all missions across the full spectrum of operations. As discussed in the *U.S. Army Field Manual 3-05-301*, from the United States' point of view, psychological operations forces may provide many capabilities that facilitate successful mission accomplishments. These are:

- Project a favorable image of the United States and allied forces
- Inform target audiences in new or denied areas
- Amplify the effects of a show-of-force
- Give target audiences alternative courses of action
- Overcome censorship, illiteracy, or interrupted communications
- Exploit ethnic, cultural, religious, or economic differences<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, psychological operations personnel perform the following traditional roles in order to meet the intent of a commander.

- Influence foreign populations by conveying information to influence attitudes and behavior for getting compliance or desired behavioral changes. These actions make military operations easier by minimizing loss of life and collateral damage, and furthering the objectives of the supported commander.
- Provide public information to foreign populations to support humanitarian activities, reinforce legitimacy, ease suffering, and restore civil order. Public information strengthens the effects of other military operations.

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<sup>79</sup> Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," 3.

<sup>80</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 439.

- In order to establish credibility and trust within the target population, serve as the commander voice to foreign population. Conveying the intent of the commander allows the commander to reach more people with less expenditure of resources and time, which is significant for the success of an operation.
- Counter enemy propaganda and disinformation campaigns by conveying friendly intent and actions correctly, therefore, deny others ability to influence the population.<sup>81</sup>

Psychological operations are planned and executed on three levels. At the strategic level, psychological operations deliver information to foreign populations to support of countries' national goals and objectives. Government and other agencies plan and conduct strategic-level psychological operations and they target the decision-makers of countries and populations. Although strategic-level psychological operations are implemented by civil agencies of government, military assets are usually used in the development, design, production, distribution, and dissemination of strategic-level products. However, the agencies must coordinate and integrate at the national level of information in order to implement joint and multinational operations. Therefore, psychological operations can be useful for operations in areas such as counterterrorism, which has strategic implications.<sup>82</sup>

The operational level consists of psychological operations for supporting combatant commanders to accomplish the mission. Operational-level psychological operations include regionally oriented actions prior to, during, or after conflict in support of a commander's plan. These operations are planned and executed by lower-level agencies in a government.<sup>83</sup>

Tactical-level psychological operations are used to support the maneuver commander's ability to win battles and engagements by employing loudspeakers, radio

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<sup>81</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2005), 179.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

and television transmissions, and leaflets in local areas.<sup>84</sup> At this level, psychological operations are conducted as an integral part of multinational, joint, and single-service operations.

### **3. Chronological Operations Process**

Psychological operations personnel begin the planning process after getting the approval of decision-makers or policymakers. The psychological operations commander gathers resources to meet the unique administrative and operational requirements. Mission analysis determines the need for the accomplishment of the task. The psychological operations process includes five subsequent stages, which begin with planning and end with evaluation. Even though the process is continuous and sequential, multiple series may be in different phases at the same time. The process is shaped around the changing behavior of a foreign target audience through the execution of products and actions.

#### **a. Phase I: Planning**

The importance of planning for the success of operations cannot be ignored. By definition, psychological operations are planned and programmed use of communication media and other actions to influence others' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Since random actions cannot produce consistent results, planning is essential for psychological operations. A psychological operation planning consists of several stages: (1) concept of operations, (2) definition of target groups, (3) clear definition of objectives, (4) general thematic guidance for each objective, (5) injunctions or prohibitions in respect to themes, (6) timetable or schedule to ensure staged and fully orchestrated multimedia operations, and (7) definitive instructions for psychological operations units and assets.<sup>85</sup> Planners formulate the psychological operations objectives for the supported commander's mission. The objectives become framework for the

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<sup>84</sup> Cox, Planning for Psychological Operations: A Proposal, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley, eds., *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies* (Alabama: Air University Press, 1996), 127, [http://aupress.maxwell.af.mil/Books/Goldstein/Goldstein\\_B18.pdf](http://aupress.maxwell.af.mil/Books/Goldstein/Goldstein_B18.pdf) (accessed October 21, 2008).

development of the plan. After determination of the objectives and plan, potential target audiences are identified. Moreover, in order to assess the effectiveness of psychological operations, measures of effectiveness are established.<sup>86</sup>

***b. Phase II: Target Audience Analysis***

In the target audience analysis phase, potential target audiences are refined and analyzed. Ideal target audiences are the groups that are homogenous and share the same conditions and vulnerabilities.<sup>87</sup> Once the target audiences have been identified, the vulnerabilities, susceptibilities, conditions, and effectiveness are analyzed. Vulnerabilities of a target audience are the four psychological factors that affect their behavior: perception, motivation, stress, and attitude. Susceptibilities of a target audience show us how they can be influenced to respond to the message. While conditions of the target audience refers to all environmental factors, such as social, political, economic, military, and physical, audience effectiveness refers to the capability of a target audience to give desired response.<sup>88</sup>

***c. Phase III: Product and Series Development and Design***

A psychological operation series includes all products and actions designed to influence target audiences to get desired behaviors. Since each psychological operation may have a different target audience, it is necessary to develop multiple series products. Product development and design is the process of creating product prototypes or creating planned actions. In this stage, the products can be created according to a target audience's vulnerabilities. TV spots and radio shows with scripts, storyboards, or concept sketches are produced and designed during this stage. Finally, the methodologies, used to test the products, such as surveys, questionnaires, expert panels or other standard means, may be determined at this stage.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations*, 179.

<sup>87</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations*, 179.

<sup>88</sup> Goldstein and Findley, eds., *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, 10.

<sup>89</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations*, 179.

***d. Phase IV: Approval, Production, Distribution, and Dissemination***

The psychological operations products in the series must be approved prior to execution in order to prevent any wrong messages disseminated. After getting approval from the authorities involved, the products are translated, pretested, modified, and produced as organic visual, audio, and audiovisual assets. The completed products are distributed physically or electronically, according to the product, to dissemination centers. The products are then disseminated to the target audience using a variety of dissemination methods, depending upon the type of product: audio, visual, or audiovisual.<sup>90</sup>

***e. Phase V: Evaluation***

The evaluation stage refers to ascertaining the effectiveness of products over time. This is accomplished by analyzing impact indicators (results of effectiveness measures) and determining to what extent the objectives have been accomplished—in short, whether the target audience has shown the desired behavior change. In addition, the other phases also include evaluation stages in order to produce effective products.

**4. Psychological Operations in Counterterrorism**

Terrorism is also a species of psychological warfare waged by terrorists through the media. Terrorists and their organizations are waging this war in order to win the hearts and minds of populations. It is understood that the war against terrorism will not be won with bombs and missiles. The way to counter psychological warfare must be with psychological warfare; thus, psychological operations must be the primary weapon in counterterrorism. In a terrorist organization, psychological operations may inject internal mistrust, causing internal power competitions and inter-group conflicts, including major disagreements about tactics and techniques.

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<sup>90</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations*, 179.

Countering terrorism requires two major elements of a nation's psychological operations program. These are:

- Inhibiting potential terrorists from joining terrorist groups
- Producing dissension within groups, reducing support for groups and their leaders, and facilitating exit from groups<sup>91</sup>

These are the elements of strategic psychological operations that must be conducted over decades. In this regard, populations and the foot soldiers of terrorist organizations become the target audience of psychological operations. The media and the Internet can be used as instruments for conveying the messages. These elements can be closely examined in two categories within the perspective of psychological operations.

*a. Inhibiting Potential Terrorists from Joining Terrorist Groups*

In countering terrorism, the first, most significant, and most difficult element is preventing individuals from joining terrorist groups. Psychological operations at the strategic and operational levels can be used to influence and prevent people from joining terrorist organizations. Individuals join terrorist organizations for varied reasons. As discussed in the previous chapter, individuals have their own motivations and reasons in joining terrorist organizations and terrorist organizations have their own radicalization and recruitment processes to get new recruits.

It is clear that the major influence for joining terrorist organizations is social settings and friendship. Therefore, psychological operations must focus on these relationships. The influence tactics and techniques (social proof, liking) should be used here. The messages must be sent by using the social leaders in the population and the products should contain messages disapproving terrorists and terrorism. In addition, educational and economic programs must be conducted with psychological operations.

In order to conduct effective psychological operations, the perceptions, beliefs, and other psychological factors of populations should be completely understood.

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<sup>91</sup> Jerrold M. Post, "Psychological Operations and Counter Terrorism," *JFQ* 37, 110.

Otherwise, the desired behavior of populations cannot be obtained and terrorist organizations can continue to recruit new members.

***b. Producing Dissension within the Group and Facilitating Exits from the Group***

Terrorist organizations are often fraught with tension. The longer they are inactive, the more the tension within the group increases. Psychological operations should magnify this tension by sowing distrust within terrorist organizations. Foot soldiers of terrorist organizations must be addressed since foot soldiers can be persuaded easily. They are not completely radicalized in their beliefs and have many things that they hold dear. The messages must contain the bad image of the leader cadre, which may inject distrust and reduce cohesion within the organization.<sup>92</sup> Apprehended terrorists can be used to address this population. Moreover, the success of other conventional operations also can be used as a deterrent asset. The vulnerabilities of terrorist organizations that can be obtained through examination of motivations, ideologies, and radicalization processes can be used to influence foot soldiers.

**D. CONCLUSION**

Every conflict in the world has a psychological dimension. Since terrorism is a form of psychological warfare, countering it must include psychological warfare. As a general definition, psychological operations are planned operations that convey selected information and indicators to foreign target audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately, the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.<sup>93</sup> Psychological operations decrease the motivation and combat efficiency of an enemy and cause dissidence and disaffection within the enemies' ranks. Moreover, psychological operations may create resistance within a population against a hostile regime as well as against a terrorist organization. In this regard, psychological operations can be used as nonlethal military operations, with

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<sup>92</sup> Post, "Psychological Operations and Counter Terrorism," 108.

<sup>93</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 439.

the employment of social, economic, and political sanctions, over a population who are favorable to terrorists or over the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization. Psychological operations can be used to deter terrorists, disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations' activities, and influence the population to sever the support given to the terrorist organizations.

Psychological operations are conducted on three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical; and five phases: planning, target audience analysis, production, dissemination, and evaluation. Psychological operations may be regarded as communication between two people; a source disseminates its message to a receiver by using some communication channels to change its behavior. In this regard, influence techniques introduced by Cialdini and Pratkanis could be used to increase the effectiveness of messages. These techniques could be helpful to influence target audiences. In terms countering terrorism, a population and the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization become the target audiences. The media and the Internet via social leaders can be used as effective communication channels. However, messages must contain appropriate context, which requires the complete understanding of a target audience.

## IV. INTELLIGENCE

### A. INTRODUCTION

It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.

Sun Tzu

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, intelligence becomes indisputably important in order to achieve victory in the battlefield. As indicated in the tenets of Sun Tzu, a country must know its enemy's capabilities and actions to defeat it. If a country does not have proper intelligence about its enemy's capabilities and operations, the conflict may lead to a catastrophic outcome.

The same assumption is also relevant for every military operation in countering terrorism. As in every other conventional military operation, psychological operations also require accurate information and intelligence about target audiences in order to increase the operations' effectiveness.

### B. INTELLIGENCE PROCESS

Intelligence refers to information that is collected, processed, and narrowed to the needs of policymakers and used by these policymakers for making decisions. It can be argued that intelligence is a subset of a broader category of information. To understand this definition of intelligence, the difference between information and intelligence has to be emphasized. Policymakers in the statecraft and soldiers in command of the battlefield need intelligence in order to make the right decisions for dealing with their adversaries. Acquiring accurate intelligence is the outcome of a process which begins with gathering raw data and continues with the collation of data and, in turn, transforming them into specific information. All intelligence is information; however, all information is not intelligence. In the publication of U.S. Joint Chief of Staff named "Joint Intelligence, JP

2-0,” the relationship between data, information, and intelligence is very well depicted graphically. According to this graphic, data is collected in the operational environment. After “processing and exploitation,” it turns into information. Then by the process of “analysis and production,” this information turns into intelligence. In this context, “intelligence has two critical features that make it different from information. Intelligence allows anticipation or prediction of future situations and circumstances and it informs decisions by illuminating the differences in available courses of actions.”<sup>94</sup>

In his book entitled “Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy,” Mark M. Lowenthal defines intelligence as “the process, by which specific types of information important to national security are requested, collected, analyzed, and provided to policy makers; the products of that processes; the safeguarding of these process and this information by counter intelligence activities; and the carrying out operations as requested by law lawful authorities.”<sup>95</sup>

By this turn, intelligence can be regarded as a product of information processes. This intelligence process comprises many steps and stages, which begin with a decision-maker’s request for information about an adversary and finish in the receipt of obtained and analyzed intelligence by decision-makers. The intelligence cycle includes stages as follows: identifying requirements, collection, processing and exploitation, analyses and production, dissemination, consumption, and feedback.<sup>96</sup>

The intelligence efforts begin with determining the requirements, which mean policy and military issues and areas. Every country has a wide variety of national security issues and foreign policy interests, both militarily and diplomatically. Decision-makers determine what kind of information they need in order to make decisions about these issues. Therefore, they want intelligence agents to gather the available information about adversaries associated with security interests and provide them with intelligence, through which they reach a final resolution.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Chief of Staff, *Joint Intelligence, JP 2-0*, June 22, 2007, I-1, 2.

<sup>95</sup> Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

Once decision-makers determine their requirements and priorities, the necessary intelligence must be collected. The collection assets are generally determined by intelligence requirements and there are many collection disciplines, all of which have significant and unique characteristics. These disciplines are human intelligence, image intelligence, measurement and signature intelligence, open source intelligence, and signal intelligence.<sup>98</sup> It is important to involve as many collection disciplines as possible on the major issues in order to obtain the required information in as accurate a form as possible.<sup>99</sup> However, while some information is obtained by specific collection disciplines, the usage of these disciplines does not provide the exact information that intelligence agents are searching for. For instance, while an adversary's military order of battle can be obtained accurately with the utilization of imagery intelligence, the personnel identification of these units can be obtained by using other intelligence disciplines, such as human intelligence.

Intelligence does not necessarily mean raw information about an enemy. Information obtained by different kinds of collection assets is processed and exploited by specialists. Processing and exploitation are the stages where the raw technical information is converted to intelligence.<sup>100</sup>

The major stage in the intelligence cycle is the analysis and production stage. The obtained and processed information is analyzed and interpreted into intelligence, which decision-makers can use in their final resolutions. In this stage, the information is interpreted into two kinds of intelligence: current intelligence, which focuses on issues that have top priority in a decision-maker's agenda and needs immediate attention, and long-term intelligence, which deals with trends and issues for future interactions.<sup>101</sup> After this stage, intelligence becomes ready for a decision-maker's usage.

Another important stage in the intelligence cycle is the dissemination and consumption stage. Unless intelligence is distributed to policymakers, who need it for

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<sup>98</sup> Peter Gudgin, *Military Intelligence: A History* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 106-111.

<sup>99</sup> Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 63.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 46

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 47.

their decisions, the whole effort in getting this intelligence becomes futile. Therefore, the analyzed and interpreted intelligence must be disseminated to key personnel at the time and location they need it. The dissemination process generally is standardized and intelligence is distributed to the consumer through many types of reports.

The last stage is the feedback stage, which requires communication between consumers and the intelligence community. After receiving and using intelligence, consumers are expected to give their feedback about the usefulness and suitability of the intelligence. Often, this stage does not function well, because the consumers are unawareness of his requirement to provide feedback.

### **C. INTELLIGENCE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS**

Intelligence is one of the key elements of military operations and an important part of every combat decision. Decision-makers need intelligence to judge an adversary's course of action, understand the battlefield, and determine the adversary's course of action. Intelligence drives operations. Operations cannot be properly planned and successfully executed without intelligence about the enemy. The operations environment requires an understanding of the enemy, who is constantly adapting new techniques, tactics, and procedures for combat. In order to gain this understanding, one must have efficient intelligence collection apparatuses and analysis of the enemy. As in other military operations, psychological operations also require intelligence of the enemy. The relationship between intelligence and psychological operations must be close and continuous, since psychological operations require timely, accurate, and most importantly, relevant intelligence about the enemy. Without proper intelligence, an entire psychological operation campaign could be directed toward the wrong audience or could produce undesirable consequences.

The intelligence requirements for psychological operations are significantly different from those of conventional operations. While conventional units need intelligence about an adversary's forces' numbers, order of battle, weapon systems, and course of action, psychological operation units need information concerning the opinions, attitudes, beliefs, sensitiveness, and patterns of rational and non-rational behavior of the

adversary.<sup>102</sup> The collection method of these requirements also differs from that of the requirements of operational intelligence. Operational intelligence could be obtained via the collection disciplines, which depend on tangible products such as photo, signal, etc. However, intelligence for psychological operations can best be obtained through social interaction with the population and with open intelligence sources such as newspapers, magazines, books, academic journals, and foreign broadcasts. Furthermore, a psychological operations unit may also request intelligence collection for specific items of factual information.

Intelligence requirements for psychological operations products fall into three broad and overlapping categories: target audience determination and analysis, theme development, and product dissemination.<sup>103</sup>

The intelligence required for the development of effective psychological operations for the Global War on Terror can be determined according to decisions as to how a country wants to counter terrorism. As discussed above, psychological operations can be used for severing the support of a population from terrorist organizations and influencing the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization. In other words, reducing support for terrorist organizations, preventing potential individuals from joining terrorist organizations, producing dissention within groups, and facilitating exits from the group must be the major elements of the psychological program of a country.<sup>104</sup> In this instance, the target audience of a psychological operation becomes the population from whom the terrorist organization gets their recruits, as well as the foot soldiers of the terrorist organization.

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<sup>102</sup> William E. Daugherty, Johns Hopkins University and Operations Research Office, *A Psychological Warfare Casebook* (Baltimore: Published for Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University by Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), 425.

<sup>103</sup> David M. McElroy, *PSYOP the Invisible Battlefield*, Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin.

<sup>104</sup> Post, “Psychological Operations and Counter Terrorism,” 106.

## 1. Target Audience Analysis

Target audience analysis includes defining the key issues, concerns, and themes of a target audience; in short, defining potential vulnerabilities. One must understand the perceptions and concerns of a target audience and know what will influence and motivate them.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, intelligence must portray a target audience as completely as possible, in order for psychological operation planners to determine the vulnerabilities of the target population.

Considering that the target audiences of psychological operations for countering terrorism are the population and the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization, cultural intelligence helps us to clarify target audience analysis and intelligence requirements. Cultural intelligence, as defined by John Coles, is the “analyzed social, political, economic, and other demographic information that provides understanding of a people or nation’s history, institutions, psychology, beliefs (such as religion), and behaviors.”<sup>106</sup> Cultural intelligence helps us to clarify why people act as they do and what they think. It provides insights into the target population’s vulnerabilities, which can be exploited. Cultural intelligence, as discussed by Coles, provides a baseline for designing successful strategies for interacting with foreign peoples, whether they are allies, neutrals, or people of an occupied territory. It gives the commander as well as the soldier the knowledge to anticipate reactions to selected courses of action. Cultural intelligence enables forces to successfully interact with foreigners and achieve operation objectives.<sup>107</sup> The detailed information to influence the emotions, motives, and behavior of a target audience can be obtained, organized, converted to cultural intelligence by intelligence agents using the intelligence process, and used in psychological operation products.

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<sup>105</sup> McElroy, *PSYOP the Invisible Battlefield*.

<sup>106</sup> John P. Coles and Naval War College Newport, RI Joint Military Operations Department, “Full Spectrum Intelligence Support for the Joint Commander: Incorporating Cultural Intelligence into Joint Doctrine,” Ft. Belvoir Defense Technical Information Center, <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA464552>; <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA464552> (accessed August 21, 2008).

<sup>107</sup> Coles and Naval War College Newport, RI Joint Military Operations DEPT, “Full Spectrum Intelligence Support for the Joint Commander: Incorporating Cultural Intelligence into Joint Doctrine.”

In order to understand a target audience's decision-making process, commanders and psychological operations personnel must have data about physical, informational, and cognitive properties of the information environment. The physical and informational properties of the environment include properties relevant to infrastructures, processes, technical designs, networks, and so forth. However, cognitive properties of the information environment consist of psychological, cultural, behavioral, and other human attributes that influence decision-making; the flow of information; and the interpretation of information by individuals or groups at any level in a state or organization. Cognitive properties may include:

- Cultural and societal factors affecting attitudes and perceptions such as language, education, history, religion, myths, personal experience, and family structure
- Identity of key individuals and groups affecting attitudes and perceptions, whether in the same or a different country as those they influence
- Identities and psychological profiles of key decision-makers, their advisors, key associates, and/or family members who influence them
- Credibility of key individuals or groups and specification of their sphere of influence
- Laws, regulations, and procedures relevant to information and decision-making processes, capability employment doctrine, timeliness, and information content
- How leaders think, perceive, plan, execute, and assess outcomes of their results and actions from their perspectives
- Identification of key historical events between countries which may affect an individual's or a group's attitudes and perceptions, whether in the same or a different country as those they influence<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Chief of Staff, *Information Operations, JP 3-13*, February 16, 2006, III-3.

Examining these properties broadly and in detail will be useful for developing psychological operations plans, programs, and products that will influence a target audience.

**History:** Studying the history of a country or a population is helpful for several reasons, in order to develop effective psychological operations plans and products. These reasons include discerning a pattern of behavior; understanding how a target audience perceives its history; determining the relative importance of political, social, and economic factors; and identifying historical issues that remain significant today and resonate with the population.<sup>109</sup>

**Natural Environment:** The natural environment plays a significant role in a society's behavior. It affects the society's population growth, distribution and migration, as well as its culture and daily life, which are essential for psychological operations.<sup>110</sup>

**Political System:** The political system of a country is important from two perspectives for psychological operations planners. Psychological operations planners must understand the formal political structure of the government and the sources of its power (legitimacy) and determine the most important issues in this system.<sup>111</sup>

**Political Economy:** Since almost every political decision has an economic outcome, economics have an impact on politics. Therefore, economic issues are important to psychological operations specialists in order to better understand the strength of competing groups in a society.<sup>112</sup>

**Military:** In most societies, military plays an important role by intervening in politics. Therefore, it becomes crucial for psychological operations planners to determine the military's role in a society, and how the government and population view the military.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 3-7.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 3-9.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

**Ideology:** Every society has a value system that generates a certain ideology. Most members of a society are aware of this ideology, though they may or may not agree with it. This ideology can integrate communities, advance the position of a particular group, and strengthen group resolve to act to change the status quo. Understanding a society's ideology and the acceptance or rejection of it by certain groups provides the psychological operations specialists with insights into target audiences' willingness to change their attitudes or behavior.<sup>114</sup>

**Religion:** Religions influence not only a society's political, economic, and social systems, but also aspects of a person's life. Since a target audience's perception of any persuasion is filtered through their religious beliefs, the impact of religion is critical for psychological operations planners to analyze.<sup>115</sup>

**Leadership:** In society, leaders use motives, purposes, and resources to mobilize other people. For psychological operations planners, influencing leaders can be a key step in affecting the behavior of a target audience. Without this aspect, the message for a target audience becomes propaganda from an occupying force and it becomes very hard for a target population to accept the message. In this regard, the behavior of leaders, their decision-making process, and their vulnerabilities become essential for developing psychological operations products.<sup>116</sup>

**Ethnicity:** There may be ethnic groups, which may not belong to the politically dominant groups, maintaining their own distinct cultural or social differences, within a target audience. Determining whether an ethnic group is critical in the behavior of a target audience is useful for planners.<sup>117</sup>

**The Media:** In any society, both news and literary media affect the national will of the country and play a significant role in determining political direction and national security objectives and policies, since they are more available to the society's leadership

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<sup>114</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 3-10.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

and population. Psychological operation planners must understand the role and effects of the media over a target population and examine the availability of media to disseminate psychological operations products.<sup>118</sup>

## **2. Theme and Product Development**

The second category of the intelligence requirement is theme and product development. In order to compose an effective message to the target audience, terrorist organizations must be examined in detail, both structurally and ideologically. Examining terrorist organizations helps to identify their vulnerabilities, which will be the major theme and subject of psychological operations products.

The intelligence requirements for theme and production can be determined by modeling the operating systems and social networks of terrorist organizations. This approach provides us with the understanding of their structural vulnerabilities. Terrorist organizations, like many other organizations in the world, all have an operating system. Terrorist organizations require that certain inputs—obtained from either internal or external sources—be converted into certain outputs or activities. In general, terrorist organizations need inputs of manpower, information, shelter, and food, especially as obtained from internal sources; as well as cadres, publicity, material, and initial financing, often provided by external resources. The inputs acquired are converted into outputs by terrorist organizations. As with other organizations, terrorist organizations tend to supervise personnel, finances, logistics, intelligence, communications, and operations branches to manage the conversion of inputs into activities; they also use incentives such as recognition, reward, and promotion, and penalties such as criticism, isolation, and physical punishment to stimulate operations.<sup>119</sup> A terrorist organization's processes reveal many intelligence clues for psychological operations products. In this regard, the recruitment and conversion process is the first intelligence requirement for psychological operations in countering terrorism.

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<sup>118</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 3-10.

<sup>119</sup> Leites and Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, 28-46.

**Recruitment Process:** The methods used in the recruitment and conversion stages can be exploited by psychological operation units. Although every terrorist organization has its own recruitment process, some general stages are crucial in the recruitment process for every terrorist organization.

As discussed in previous chapters, although there are a great variety of recruitment processes that might be used by different terrorist organizations, a review of literature reveals a few common structures.<sup>120</sup> There are four approaches used by terrorist organizations to disseminate their messages to a target population; namely, the net approach, the funnel approach, the infection approach, and the seed crystal approach. Examining these recruitment processes is useful in developing effective psychological operations products.

Intelligence agents can acquire information about the recruitment process of a terrorist organization through open sources as well as surrendered or captured terrorists or civilian detainees of terrorist organizations. The declarations, speeches, and rhetoric of leaders, as well as documents obtained from terrorists, are the most significant sources of this information. After getting the information, intelligence analysts convert this information to intelligence, which psychological operations units can use in their product development.

**Conversion Process:** As discussed earlier, after recruiting new members into their organizations, terrorists use many methods in order to produce their outputs, such as attacks, sabotage, violence against individuals, and public violence. They use incentives such as recognition, reward, and promotion; and penalties such as criticism, isolation, and physical punishment to compliance. The leaders sometimes use inappropriate incentives to motivate the foot soldiers. They may not treat every member in the organization equally, which may cause dissidence within the organization. Accordingly, intelligence about the process can be helpful in developing psychological operations products to influence foot soldiers.

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<sup>120</sup> Gerwehr, and Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, 85.

**General Structure:** General structure of a terrorist organization is also a significant source of information to exploit. The leader cadre, personnel, and the communication method form the general structure of an organization. The leader cadre manages the organization and generally makes decisions about personnel, finances, and logistics, and communication enables a leader to provide vision and direction to those that manage and direct the organic essentials, infrastructure, population, and fielded forces. Psychological operations could focus on leader cadres' personal characteristics and weaknesses. The different social and racial groups within terrorist organizations, particularly in transnational terrorist organizations, can also be taken into consideration to develop effective products.

**Ideology:** Terrorism is defined as “acts of violence intentionally perpetrated on civilian non-combatants with the goal of furthering some ideological, religious, or political objective.”<sup>121</sup> As understood from this definition, terrorist organizations use terrorism to impose their ideology upon populations. In this regard, the ideology of terrorist organizations can be considered another intelligence requirement for psychological operations.

Ideologies generally are based on a set of shared beliefs that explain and justify a set of agreed upon behavioral rules. For terrorists, ideology helps to provide “the moral and political vision that inspires their violence, shapes the way in which they see the world, and defines how they judge the actions of people and institutions.”<sup>122</sup> For a rational person, terrorist organizations’ ideologies may include many improper aspects that can be used in psychological operations. Showing falseness of ideology can cause exits from terrorist organizations.

**Terrorists’ Motivations:** Terrorist motivation is another key factor in understanding whether, how, and which individuals in a given environment will enter the process of becoming a terrorist. As discussed chapter II, one’s motivation for engaging in terrorism is often presumed to be the cause of joining a terrorist organization. Some

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<sup>121</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 6.

<sup>122</sup> C. J. M. Drake, “The Role of Ideology in Terrorists’ Target Selection,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10 no. 2 (1998): 53-85.

schools of thought point towards terrorist motivations as the key factors that cause individuals to join terrorist organizations and engage in terrorist activity. These motivational categories are the feeling of injustice, identity, and belonging. Knowing this provides an enormous information source for psychological operations designed to influence the foot soldiers of terrorist organizations.

**Terrorist Organizations' Goals and Strategies:** Goals and strategies are other aspects of terrorist organizations that can be used in psychological operations to influence a target population. Since psychological operations aim to show a target population that they are waging a lost war, terrorist organizations' goals and strategies must be analyzed and the vulnerabilities in those aspects must be presented in the psychological operations product.

### **3. Product Dissemination**

The final stage of intelligence requirements is the actual delivery of the psychological operations products to the intended audience. There are a wide variety of means of disseminating messages, depending on the target audience. Furthermore, it is important to reach the entire audience, not only a part of it.

Even though psychological operations units have the means to disseminate messages by operating organic television, radio, and print operations, the operations effectiveness increases in the case that an existing host nation's media is used. It is important to collect information on the host nation's facilities' capabilities, audience, programming type, ownership and control, and credibility.

Some organizations may use unique forms of communication and slang, which enable them to communicate easily. Knowing and using these communication properties may greatly increase the understanding and acceptance of the message by the target audience. Defectors or host nation personnel can provide vital insight in collecting information in this area.

The means and time for dissemination of messages are crucial for the effectiveness of the messages. How much a target audience has access to products and

understand the content of messages is key. Product dissemination involves transmitting products directly to the target audience via the desired media. As an example, the Internet started being used among terrorist organizations in many different ways in order to achieve their goals. Psychological operations can take advantage of the Internet to disseminate the messages and the products to target population. How much a target audience has access to the Internet becomes an important intelligence requirement to conduct effective psychological operations. In this regard, media analysis must be done during earlier stages to determine the best method and time for reaching the target audience.

Some intelligence requirements for the product dissemination stage are same as other stages' requirements. Since a message must be disseminated to influential individuals in the population, a network analysis of population and organization is necessary.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Intelligence drives operations. Without proper intelligence, operations cannot be properly planned or successfully executed. Decision-makers need intelligence to judge an adversary's course of action, understand the battlefield, and determine their course of action according to adversary's course of action. In addition to other military operations, psychological operations also require having intelligence of the enemy. The relationship between intelligence and psychological operations must be close and continuous since psychological operations require timely, accurate, and most importantly, relevant intelligence about the enemy. Without proper intelligence, an entire psychological operations campaign could be directed toward the wrong audience or could produce undesirable consequences.

The intelligence requirements for psychological operations are significantly different from those of conventional operations. Conventional units need intelligence about adversaries' forces' numbers, order of battle, weapon systems, and courses of action; however, psychological operations units need information concerning the perceptions, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, sensitiveness, and patterns of rational and non-

rational behavior of adversaries.<sup>123</sup> In addition to that, the collection method of these requirements also differs from the operational intelligence requirements. Intelligence for psychological operations can be best obtained through social interaction with the population and open intelligence sources such as newspapers, magazines, books, academic journals, and foreign broadcasts.

Intelligence requirements for psychological operations products fall into three broad and overlapping categories: target audience determination and analysis, theme development, and product dissemination.<sup>124</sup>

Target audience analysis includes defining the key issues, concerns, and themes of the target audience; in short, defining potential vulnerabilities. Considering that the target audiences of psychological operations for countering terrorism are the population and the foot soldiers of terrorist organizations, cultural intelligence helps us to clarify target audience analysis and intelligence requirements. In addition, examining properties of populations, such as history, political system, and political economy, broadly and in detail, will be useful for developing psychological operations plans, programs, and products that will influence a target audience.

In order to compose an effective message to the target audience, terrorist organizations must be examined in detail, both structurally and ideologically. Examining terrorist organizations helps to identify their vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities will be the major theme and subject of psychological operations products. These requirements can be obtained through the examination of terrorist motivations; terrorist organizations' radicalization, recruitment, and conversion processes; ideology; and general structure.

The intelligence requirements for product dissemination include the examination of the means and timing for disseminating the psychological operations' products. Which means can be used and how much a target population has access into products become the major issues.

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<sup>123</sup> Daugherty, Johns Hopkins University and Operations Research Office, *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, 425.

<sup>124</sup> McElroy, *PSYOP the Invisible Battlefield*.

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## V. ANALYSIS OF AL-QAEDA

### A. INTRODUCTION

The 2001 terrorist attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center was the twenty-first major attack conducted by al-Qaeda. In the aftermath of these attacks, the United States started and led the Global War on Terrorism. The United States has made significant improvements in disrupting and destroying terrorist organizations' activities. The destruction of al-Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan, the elimination of many group leaders and the growing resolve of many countries in taking action against al-Qaeda and its associates are significant successes of the United States' strategy of counter terrorism. However, al-Qaeda has adapted new methods to recruit members and conduct attacks against the United States' forces especially deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In order to counter al-Qaeda, the psychological dimensions of terrorism must be comprehended by political and military leaders of countries in this war on terrorism. The nature of al-Qaeda and its members, such as their motivations, beliefs, ideologies, strategies, and tactics, as well as the connection between al-Qaeda and different layers of the population in those regions, must be defined and completely understood. Thus, the vulnerabilities, which can be obtained from analysis of nature and connection, have to be determined in order to degrade terrorists' morale and motivation and sever the connection between al-Qaeda and populations. From that standpoint, al-Qaeda must be destroyed; its leadership structure in the short run and its ideology in the long run.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> James Phillips, *The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 2006,) 3. Note: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl928.cfm> (accessed December 2, 2008.)

## B. VULNERABILITIES OF AL-QAEDA

Al-Qaeda is a transnational Sunni Islamist terrorist group. It presents the world with a new kind of threat. Highly educated and disciplined individuals represent the core of the group. Although al-Qaeda consists of fewer than 1,000 dedicated members,<sup>126</sup> it is believed that it operates in 60 countries all around the world.

Despite intense government countermeasures in the world, al-Qaeda has implemented devastating operations from the air, land, and sea, such as the *USS Cole* operation in October 2000, the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Madrid railway bombing in March 2004, the Sinai resort bombings of October 2004, and the London bombings of July 2005.<sup>127</sup> Although it has been degraded by losses in Afghanistan, it remains a potent threat to the United States. Countering al-Qaeda is thus likely to preoccupy U.S. national security institutions for at least the remainder of the decade, and probably longer.

Capturing or killing al-Qaeda leaders is only a matter of appropriate military and intelligence. As long as information is possessed, it is very easy to destroy the leader cadre. It is obvious that capturing and killing al-Qaeda leaders would “diminish the scale of the threat, hinder their ability to coordinate operations, restrict their financing, and set back the recruitment, training, and deployment of new terrorist operatives.”<sup>128</sup> However, neutralizing al-Qaeda leaders does not end the threat posed by al-Qaeda and its affiliates, since al-Qaeda today “has become more an idea or a concept than an organization; an amorphous movement tenuously held together by a loosely networked transnational constituency rather than a monolithic, international terrorist organization with either a defined or identifiable command and control apparatus.”<sup>129</sup> The war against al-Qaeda

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<sup>126</sup> Phillips, *The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat*, 3.

<sup>127</sup> Audrey K. Cronin, *Terrorists and Suicide Attacks* (Washington, D.C.: CRS Report for Congress, August 23, 2008).

<sup>128</sup> Phillips, *The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat*, 4.

<sup>129</sup> Bruce Hoffman, “The Changing Face of Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27 (2004): 54–560.

will be a protracted struggle. Since it has been proved that military operations alone cannot end the threat of al-Qaeda, influence must be first strategy used in destroying this organization in this protracted war.

Moreover, it is obvious that al-Qaeda's core group is disciplined, relentless, and fanatical and probably cannot be deterred to any significant degree. They undoubtedly will continue to launch their attacks until they are captured, killed, or decisively defeated. The lust for "martyrdom" by middle and lower levels of al-Qaeda members makes it difficult to deter them. It is therefore easier to discourage potential recruits from joining al-Qaeda than to stop them from attacking before they are indoctrinated and prepared for what they are persuaded is religious martyrdom. In order to deter a potential recruit from joining, it is helpful to know the vulnerabilities of an enemy. In order to manifest the vulnerabilities of al-Qaeda, first, al-Qaeda's ideology will be discussed.

## **1. Ideology of al-Qaeda**

Al-Qaeda's ideology is founded on Islamism and the pursuit of jihad. Many Islamists have incorrectly interpreted jihad as a Holy War against western countries. According to a dictionary definition, jihad is the "exertion of one's utmost effort in order to attain a goal or to repel something detestable."<sup>130</sup> In Sharia, Islamic rules, the concept of jihad includes absolute personal sacrifice in order to raise the word of Allah, to aid his fight.<sup>131</sup> In the Quran, jihad is used in many different contexts, such as "recognizing and loving the Allah; resisting the pressure of parents, peers and society, [who are infidels]; staying on the straight path [consistently]; striving for religious deeds; having the courage and steadfastness to convey the message of Islam; defending Islam and the community; helping friends who may not be Muslim; removing treacherous rulers from power;

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<sup>130</sup> Members.tripod.com in Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

<sup>131</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, 84.

defending all of the above through pre-emptive strikes; winning the freedom to inform, educate, and convey the message of Islam in an open and free environment, and thus freeing people from tyranny.”<sup>132</sup>

Traditionally, “jihad” has two dominant meanings. The “greater jihad” refers to “personal struggle,” and the “lesser jihad” refers to the “holy war.” Personal struggle consists of “go[ing] through to resist temptation, become[ing] more righteous individuals, and build[ing] a better Muslim community.”<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, the “holy war” means the “protection of the Muslim community through a call to arms.”<sup>134</sup>

In a military context, jihad is divided into two roles, offensive and defensive jihad. If one attacks an enemy in his own territory, it is called an offensive jihad. Defensive jihad refers to the expelling of an enemy from the jihadist’s homeland. While the offensive jihad is not obligatory for every Muslim, the defensive jihad is compulsory for every Muslim in the world.<sup>135</sup> The six principles of jihad are:

1. Jihad is for the sake of Allah, not for the sake of wealth, goods, fame, glory, or power;
2. Obedience to the imam;
3. Avoid misappropriating booty;
4. Respect the pledges of protection;
5. Manifest endurance under attack; and
6. Avoid corruption.

Al-Qaeda leaders and members generally misinterpret the jihad concept and use it as a justification of their violence. The renewed commitment to defensive jihad and the promotion of violence against the Saudi government and the United States started with the presence of the United States and other non-Muslim troops in Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Gulf War.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> M. Amir Ali, *Jihad Explained*, ict.org.il. in Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*.

<sup>133</sup> Glenn E. Robinson, “Jihadi Information Strategy: Sources, Opportunities and Vulnerabilities,” in Arquilla and Borer, eds. *Information Strategy and Warfare* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 6.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, 84.

<sup>136</sup> Phillips, *The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat*, 2.

In the early 1990s, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia at all costs was the first goal of terrorist Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden criticized the Saudi royal family publicly and alleged that their invitation of foreign troops to the Arabian Peninsula was an insult to the sanctity of the birthplace of Islam and a betrayal of the global Islamic community. Bin Laden's radical views sharpened in the following years; finally, bin Laden issued a declaration of jihad against the United States in 1996. The declaration consisted of a condemnation of the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia, critiques of the international sanctions on Iraq, U.S. support for Israel's presence in the region, and ongoing massacres—according to bin Laden—in Tajikistan, Burma, and Kashmir. He argued that the Islamic world should unite, get together, as an umma—entire community of Muslims bound together by religion—and defend Islam against the United States and other apostate regimes. Bin Laden also urged Muslims to find a leader to unite them and establish a “pious caliphate,” which would be governed by Sharia and follow Islamic principles.<sup>137</sup>

Even though bin Laden did not have any formal education on the teachings of Islam, and did not have any traditional Islamic religious credentials or authority, in 1998, he issued another fatwa, or religious edict, asserting that the United States had made a clear declaration of war on God, his messenger, and Muslims through its policies in the Islamic world. He called every Muslim to defend Islam and targeted American civilians as well as military personnel. After this fatwa, al-Qaeda attacked the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (1998); the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen (2000); and the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, NY and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. (2001). These attacks caused many civil and military personnel deaths. Bin Laden refused direct responsibility for these attacks; however, he approved of the strikes and stated that he shared the motivations of the individuals who carried out the attacks.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Phillips, *The Evolving Al-Qaeda Threat*, 4.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 5.

In summary, these issues were identified by bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, the second and prominent leader of al-Qaeda, in numerous speeches as causes for jihad:

1. Western forces and civilians on the Arabian Peninsula,
2. The West's imposition of artificially low oil prices,
3. Unqualified American support for Israel,
4. American support for powers that oppress Muslims,
5. American military presence in Muslim countries outside the Arabian Peninsula, and
6. American support and protection for Muslim tyrannies.<sup>139</sup>

There are many false aspects of al-Qaeda's jihad interpretation, which could be used in psychological operations products for influencing people not to join al-Qaeda. The first and most important one is the killing of innocent people living in the region of the site of an operation. The killing of non-combatants is definitely forbidden in Islam, without regard to their religious beliefs. However, al-Qaeda misinterprets some verses of the Quran to justify violence and the killing of innocent people. Historically, al-Qaeda has been at its weakest theologically and ideologically when trying to justify the killing of innocents. In one of his letters, Zawahiri warns Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda associated group in Iraq, about the probable negative effects of killing innocent people within Muslim societies. Zawahiri justifies the killing of innocent people because of *Mas'alatut al-Tatarrus* (the issue of non-Muslims taking Muslims as human shields).<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, the concept of *Mas'alatut al-Tatarrus* refers to "the instrument of war known as the human shield as a way of protecting someone from the attacks of an enemy."<sup>141</sup> Zawahiri did not offer any detailed analysis to explain or justify this assertion. In conclusion, al-Qaeda does not have any current credible justification for killing innocent people.

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<sup>139</sup> Eric J. Brown, "Global Charismatic Leadership: A Necessary Reagent in Al Qaeda's Resilience," *Georgetown University, Security Studies Program*, May 8, 2007.

<sup>140</sup> Jarret Brancman, Brian Fishman, and Joseph Felter, "The Power of Truth: Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri," *Combating Terrorism Center*, April 21, 2008.

<sup>141</sup> Qa'id, Hassan Muhammad [Abu Yahya al-Libi], *Tatarrus in Modern Jihad*, in Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*.

The other false aspect of al-Qaeda's ideology is that it calls every Muslim to defend the countries that were invaded by the United States or other Western States. They make use of the defensive jihad concept to attempt to convince individuals. It is obvious that many Muslims feel humiliation and resentment over the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the continued bloodshed of their co-religionists in Palestine, Chechnya, and Kashmir, among other places.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, the inappropriate treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay also helped al-Qaeda easily persuade individuals to join them or their affiliated groups, since they interpreted the actions as an attack on Islam as well as their lives. Unless the United States justifies invasions, giving rational reasons for them, al-Qaeda will always have leverage it can use to recruit more people. In this case, the United States must carry out effective information operations by highlighting values that are common to western and Muslim worlds, explaining the real reasons of the invasions such as destroying the evil regimes, freeing the Afghani and Iraqi people, and founding democratic and stable regimes that provide wealth and equal opportunity for populations. The key entities that would be able to influence populations in this ideological war and could be used in information operations are Muslim governments and local imams in these countries. Unless the United States justifies the invasions, disproves terrorists' claims, and hinders people from joining terrorist organizations, the War on Terror will not end.

## **2. The Goals and Strategies of al-Qaeda**

As an Islamic terrorist organization, al-Qaeda has a main goal: to destroy the apostate regimes in Muslim countries, take over the world, and turn it into an Islamic State or Global Caliphate.<sup>143</sup> The same objective is also espoused by other Islamic terrorist organizations in the world. In order to achieve this goal, Islamic terrorist organizations have followed different strategies over the course of time. Throughout the 1970's, 1980's, and the first half of the 1990's, most jihadi documents stressed the treacherous, destructive role played by the near enemy: pro-Western Middle East

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<sup>142</sup> Bruce Hofmann, "Does Our Counter Terrorism Strategy Match the Threat," September 2005, 13.

<sup>143</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, 271.

regimes, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Terrorist organizations called for a total mobilization and confrontation against jahiliya (lack of Sharia law) society and rule in these nations, rather than taking jihad global. Fighting the far enemy—the West and the United States—was neither a priority nor a goal for most jihadists. However, in the mid-1990's, a new shift of focus, from localism to globalism, began to take shape among some jihadists. This shift occurred because of two critical factors: first, the Afghan War and humiliating withdrawal of Russian troops, which planted seeds of transnational jihad and emboldened Arab veterans, and second, the U.S. involvement in Saudi Arabia after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and stationing of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia, which inflamed the religious sensibilities of many Saudis, radicals, and bin Laden himself, reinforcing the conviction that the United States possessed hegemonic designs on the Middle East.

Therefore, the United States became the first enemy must be destroyed in the bin Laden's list. Bin Laden used American military presence as a rallying cry and effective tool to recruit new members.<sup>144</sup> Years ago, bin Laden defined this strategy as a two-pronged assault on both the “far enemy” (the U.S. and the West) and the “near enemy” (those reprobate, authoritarian, anti-Islamic regimes in the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, against whom the global jihadist movement is implacably opposed.)<sup>145</sup>

After the 9/11 terror attacks, al-Qaeda adopted a new approach. In order to succeed, al-Qaeda described seven phases: Awakening, Opening Eyes, Arising and Standing Up, The Downfall of Arab Regimes, Declaration of Caliphate, Total Confrontation, and Definite Victory. The aim of the September 11, 2001 suicide attacks was to provoke the U.S. into declaring war on the Islamic world—thereby “Awakening” and mobilizing the radicals. In phase two, “Opening Eyes,” the terrorists hope to make the “Western conspiracy” aware of the “Islamic community” and make their secret battalions ready for battle. Phase three, “Arising and Standing Up,” consists of attacks

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<sup>144</sup> Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 80.

<sup>145</sup> Hoffman, *The Changing Face of Terrorism*.

against secular Turkey and archenemy Israel. The downfall of hated Arab regimes, including Saudi Arabia and Jordan, will be phase four, “The Downfall of Arab Regimes.” Phase five, “Declaration of Caliphate,” will be between 2013 and 2016. At that point, an Islamic state, or caliphate, could be declared. After this phase, from 2016 and on, “Total Confrontation” between believers and non-believers will occur. The seventh phase is the final stage and is described as a “Definite Victory”. This phase should last no longer than two years and be completed by 2020. At the end of these phases, al-Qaeda would be able to establish an Islamic theocracy by destroying the moderate wing of Islam, destroying Israel, and inflicting maximum damage and human suffering on the infidels.<sup>146</sup>

The problem with the al-Qaeda strategy is that establishing an Islamic state, or “Global Caliphate,” is not an attainable goal since caliphate is not a current concept for the Muslims in the world anymore. “Caliphate” was established after the death of the prophet Muhammad to govern the country according to the rules of Islam and to unite Muslims against enemies. After that, the caliphate became a unifying concept, calling Muslim communities to come together against enemies. However, at the end of the eighteen century, with the birth and development of national countries, the concept of the caliphate began to lose its effectiveness in Muslim communities. At the birth of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the Turkish Parliament denied the caliphate concept and terminated it. Therefore, in this century, this concept is outmoded.

In addition, it will be useful to show individuals that they can live according to their religion and beliefs in many secular Muslim-populated countries, such as Turkey. In many countries, not only Muslims, but also other minority religious and ethnic groups, can perform their religious ceremonies freely. All of these prove that a caliphate is not required in order to live according to one’s religious beliefs. This can be accomplished by encouraging regimes to found and promote secular institutions that emphasize democracy and patriotism.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Mark R. Wallace, “What it Will Take to Win the Global War on Terrorism,” *U.S. Army War College, PA*, (March 15, 2006): 2.

<sup>147</sup> Wallace, “What it Will Take to Win the Global War on Terrorism,” 7.

Another point that must be emphasized about the strategy of al-Qaeda is that it does not have the capability to fight against the Western countries and the United States since it is a terrorist organization. It has neither territory nor a country. It does not have a regular army to wage wars. As stated by James Philips, “al-Qaeda is fighting a losing battle, that hurts the Muslim community by its ruthless tactics, and that its long term goals are unrealistic and even run counter to the interests of most Muslims.” Showing these vulnerabilities by psychological operations to individuals will decrease the recruitment number since no person wants to die for the sake of an unattainable goal.

### **3. Terrorists’ Motivations and Recruitment and Radicalization Processes**

In previous chapters, it was discussed that terrorists may have more than one reason to perform terrorist acts, such as psychological, economic, political, religious, and sociological motivations.<sup>148</sup> Martha Crenshaw states that there are at least four categories of psychological motivation among jihadist terrorists: (1) the opportunity for action, (2) the need to belong, (3) the desire for social status, and (4) the acquisition of material reward.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, injustice, identity, and belonging could be perceived as main themes in terms of motivation of terrorists.<sup>150</sup> These themes are also related to one’s potential openness to joining terrorist organizations, or one’s vulnerability. The feeling of being important in a social group and need to belong to something are in human nature. Therefore, people that have the motivations discussed above are bent for joining a terrorist organization.

Al-Qaeda recruits these kinds of people by promising them social status and materialistic reward. For instance, “al-Qaeda incurs costs related to its cell members,

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<sup>148</sup> Hudson, “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?” 15.

<sup>149</sup> Crenshaw, “An Organizational Approach to the Analysis of Political Terrorism,” 465-489.

<sup>150</sup> Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 24.

such as medical care and family dependency for members killed or imprisoned.”<sup>151</sup> These kinds of people may join al-Qaeda to guarantee financial support for themselves and their families for the rest of their lives.

Individuals that have the motivations discussed above are exposed to a kind of radicalization process, either in their own country or in another country. In the religious radicalization process, Mark Sageman notes that the expatriate individuals generally are inclined to join terrorist organizations since they feel alienated from the population in which they live. Another point is that the global Islamist terrorism social movement is based to a great degree on friendship and kinship. The friendship process includes two aspects: the first one is the collective decision of a group to join a terrorist organization. This refers to the pathway which is a group of people who collectively decide to join a terrorist organization. The second one is joining one’s childhood friends who have already joined a terrorist organization.<sup>152</sup> He describes the radicalization process within four stages: the moral outrage of individuals, which refers to the strong motivational effects of hearing about or watching suffering fellow Muslims; the moral universe, which refers to the idea that there is a war against Islam in the world; resonance with personal experiences; and the mobilization by a network, which refers to the guidance of terrorist organizations.<sup>153</sup>

For the first stage of the radicalization process, childhood and adult experiences are very important. People may have weak characters, may have some bad life experiences, or may be living in unsatisfying life conditions. In Gerwehr and Daly’s article, they mention some of the characteristics as being: “a high level of current distress and dissatisfaction, cultural disillusionment in a frustrated seeker, lack of intrinsic religious belief system or value system, some dysfunctionality in family system and some dependent personality tendencies.”<sup>154</sup> These are the characteristics of individuals

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<sup>151</sup> Richard J. Hazdra, Lieutenant Colonel in the United States of Air Force, *Al-Qaeda as a System*, USAWC Strategy Research Project, March 15, 2006, 15, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/ksil363.pdf> (accessed December 2, 2008).

<sup>152</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, 66.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Gerwehr and Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, 85.

vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups. Sayyid Qutb, who is an Islamist and the leading intellectual of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and '60s, can be regarded as a significant individual who had these vulnerabilities in his character.

Al-Qaeda is also seeking those people who are likely to become radicalized. Richard Reid, known as “the shoe bomber,” is one example of someone recruited by al-Qaeda. “He attempted to bring down an American Airlines flight in December 2001 by detonating explosives hidden in his shoes.”<sup>155</sup> After investigations, it was realized that Reid had most of these characteristics. His father had been in prison for years and his parents separated in his childhood. “He converted to Islam in prison in his twenties. Finally, one could argue that because of his experiences—a life of crime, imprisonment, a broken family, and a sense of being part of an out-group because of his mixed race—Reid was undergoing severe distress and dissatisfaction.”<sup>156</sup> Weak characters and impressionable people with problematic childhoods are targets of al-Qaeda for recruitment, because it is easy to convince people having these characteristics.

It could be perceived that the United States’ policy on the Global War on Terrorism is mostly targeting Muslims, which attracts their rage. This policy includes the United States’ support of Israelis, suffering Iraqis, and the United States’ continued presence in Muslim lands. The Muslim population is “motivated by a shared sense of enmity and grievance felt towards the United States and West in general and their host-nations in particular. In this specific instance, however, the relationship with al-Qaeda is more inspirational than actual, abetted by profound rage over the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and the oppression of Muslims in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, and elsewhere.”<sup>157</sup> These suffering people, who have lost their relatives and been exploited for years, suppose that there is a war against Islam—the moral universe stage—and may become more radicalized in their beliefs and join al-Qaeda in a desperate manner.

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<sup>155</sup> Gerwehr and Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, 85.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>157</sup> Hoffman, *The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 7.

After being radicalized in their beliefs, individuals need a kind of mobilization—a recruitment process—that is provided by terrorist organizations. Terrorist organizations use different recruitment processes, according to the psychology and vulnerability of populations. Although there are a great variety of recruitment processes that might be used by terrorist organizations, a review of literature reveals a few common structures for al-Qaeda.<sup>158</sup> Ultimately, as discussed in chapter II and IV, there are four approaches used by al-Qaeda to disseminate their messages to a target population, namely the net approach, the funnel approach, the infection approach, and the seed crystal approach.

While a terrorist organization targets the whole community equally in the net approach, the funnel approach uses an incremental pattern in order to recruit members of the population. If the target population is limited in accepting foreign ideas, the infection approach is used for recruitment. An agent can be inserted into the targeted community to rally potential recruits. Generally, in the seed crystal approach, a targeted population is so inaccessible that a trusted agent cannot be inserted into the population. In this case, recruiters may seek to provide a context for self-recruitment.<sup>159</sup>

Psychological motivations, as mentioned above, include belonging, identity, and reward. For joining al-Qaeda, these motivations include the desire for young Muslim men to appear religious, to be honorable in the eyes of family and friends, and to engage in sanctioned violence.<sup>160</sup> People join terrorist organizations to feel that they are important and valued, and that they will be rewarded after they die. Nevertheless, in Islam it is absolutely forbidden to terrorize and kill an innocent person unless he attacks your life, property, and religion. In the Quran, it is stated,

Whosoever kills an innocent human being, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind, and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind”<sup>161</sup> and “Invite all to the way of your God with wisdom and beautiful preaching. And argue with them in ways that

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<sup>158</sup> Gerwehr and Daly, *Al-Qaeda: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment*, 76.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>160</sup> Mark E. Stout, Jessica M. Huckabee, John R. Schindler, and Jim Lacey, *The Terrorist Perspectives Project Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaida and Associated Movements* (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2008), 212.

<sup>161</sup> Quran (5:32) <http://www.islamfortoday.com/mat01.htm> (accessed December 2, 2008).

are best and most gracious. For your God knows best who have strayed from his path and who receive guidance. And if you do respond to an attack, respond no worse than they did. But if you show patience, that is indeed the best course. Be patient—for your patience is from God. Indeed, God is with those who restrain themselves and those who do good.<sup>162</sup>

Moreover, Islam also forbids committing suicide. It is believed that an individual that commits suicide will be burned in the flames of hell forever and will never be forgiven, since Allah is the only one who has the authority to give and take lives.

Terrorist motivations and al-Qaeda radicalization and recruitment processes also have many vulnerabilities that can be exploited in psychological operations. These vulnerabilities can also be regarded as the barriers that prevent individuals from joining al-Qaeda, and be categorized as familial, economic, social/societal, and psychological. These barriers embody the notion of what strategists call “loving life too much.”<sup>163</sup> These barriers can be emphasized in psychological operations products.

The first barrier, the familial barrier, is the pull of family. Most al-Qaeda members are married and have more than one child. The radicalized individual hesitates to join a terrorist organization and travel to other parts of the world, where wars are waged, since they believe that their families and children will be undergoing financial hardships and be miserable in the future. Even single individuals seek their families’ permission, and sometimes have to fight against strong parental disapproval. They may back down their decision about traveling to other countries. Therefore, most members break contact with their families and friends after getting into a jihad. It is also known that terrorist cell members who maintain contact with friends and family outside are more likely to withdraw. Portrayals of miserable families and friends can be used as major themes in psychological operations products.

Another barrier is economic, for individuals who desire a comfortable life and Western materialistic culture. In Western countries, many individuals have a high standard of living. These individuals have to give up their jobs and opportunities to

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<sup>162</sup> Quran (16:125-128) <http://www.islamfortoday.com/mat01.htm> (accessed December 2, 2008).

<sup>163</sup> Stout, Huckabee, Schindler, and Lacey, *The Terrorist Perspectives Project Strategic and Operational Views of Al Qaida and Associated Movements*, 212.

pursue a jihad. In addition, many foot soldiers' financial status could be at an economic extreme and they cannot afford their personal expenses and also to travel for a jihad. Al-Qaeda does not pay the expenses of these members. For example, L'Houssaine Khertchou, a Moroccan al-Qaeda member, joined the organization in 1991 and trained to serve as bin Laden's personal pilot. He defected from al-Qaeda since he became bitter after one of bin Laden's aides turned down his request for \$500 to cover the costs of his wife's cesarean section.<sup>164</sup> Reasons like this make many foot soldiers hesitant to join the jihad caravan. Exploiting this financial situation may be useful for the products of psychological operations.

Another type of barrier, the psychological, is the most important in terms psychological operations, and is unique to the foot soldiers of an organization. This psychological barrier includes the concept of *wahn*, which refers to the love of life, children, and property, and fear of death, torment, pain, and martyrdom.

The last type of barrier is social and societal barrier, which refers to the perception of being at disadvantage. In this barrier, the West disseminates messages claiming that terrorists are at disadvantage to population. These barriers are between the individual and the society, which makes it easier to overcome. Therefore, the strategists already have established a counter argument to the messages from the West, such as Islamic religious reformation, self redemption, and anti-western views, to counter them. These themes can also be used in psychological operations to influence foot soldiers.

#### **4. Organizational Structure and Leaders**

Examination of al-Qaeda structure and its leader cadre may reveal numerous vulnerabilities that can be used in information operations. Al-Qaeda's organizational and operational infrastructure is different from other guerilla or terrorist groups. Al-Qaeda's infrastructure has proved very difficult to detect and combat since it is embedded in diverse populations. Al-Qaeda is neither a single group nor a coalition of groups: it comprises a core base in Afghanistan and other largely independent terrorist groups that

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<sup>164</sup> Michael Jacobson, "Why Terrorists Quit: Gaining from Al-Qa'ida's Losses," *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel at West Point*, 1 no. 8 (July 2008): 3.

it draws on for offensive actions and other responsibilities. Al-Qaeda leaders serve as an integral part of the high command for their organization.<sup>165</sup> Since it was founded, al-Qaeda has been led by charismatic leaders. Because of these leaders, al-Qaeda has survived. They developed an emotional attachment with their followers. They focused the organization on a specific cause, the establishment of Islamic State or Global Caliphate, which drove the followers to act beyond what they would in general social contexts.<sup>166</sup>

In order to carry out effective psychological operations, leaders of al-Qaeda, such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, must be investigated, and the vulnerabilities that can be obtained from these investigations must be used in psychological operations. Leaders must be discredited in every possible way. The messages should focus on undermining the stature of their leadership. The wrongness in their characters and their failures must be shown. For instance, even though Osama bin Laden did not obtain any kind of religious education, he issued many fatwa (Islamic religious edicts), to call Muslims to jihad. However, in Islam, only individuals who have religious education are permitted to issue a fatwa.

There are many tactical and operational differences between the individual leaders of al-Qaeda, which may play a significant role in terrorist disillusionment and its use in psychological operations. For example, Essam al-Ridi, one of defectors of al-Qaeda, asserted that during the battles against Soviets in Afghanistan, he was offended by battlefield orders from bin Laden and other leaders, who lacked military experience. These kinds of differences among leaders may be emphasized to influence a member to defect from the organization. Another example may include publicizing a video demonstrating, for example, that one of the leaders is not skillful in handling a firearm, which may make members uncomfortable about taking orders from this person.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda : Global Network of Terror*, 54.

<sup>166</sup> Brown, “Global Charismatic Leadership: A Necessary Reagent in Al Qaeda’s Resilience.”

<sup>167</sup> Jacobson, “Why Terrorists Quit: Gaining from Al-Qa’ida’s Losses,” 3.

## C. CONCLUSION

The Global War on Terror is a protracted war. In order to defeat terrorist organizations in this war, the psychological aspect of war, in addition to the conventional aspect, must be comprehended by world officials, since many terrorist organizations have the support of the population. Al-Qaeda also has a great support of radical Muslim communities. In order to destroy al-Qaeda, this support must be severed. Implementing effective information operations will be helpful in defeating al-Qaeda. However, in order to carry out effective psychological operations, vulnerabilities of al-Qaeda must be determined. Analysis of al-Qaeda's ideology, strategy, members' motivation, radicalization and recruitment processes, and organizational structure would reveal numerous vulnerabilities that can be used in implementing effective information operations. The killing of innocent people, the false interpretations of jihad concepts, and the unattainable global caliphate objective are some of the vulnerabilities of al-Qaeda. By making use of these vulnerabilities and presenting these vulnerabilities to target populations via suitable means and individuals, the United States and other countries that suffer from terrorism may influence individuals not to join al-Qaeda, or to defect from the terrorist organization. Then, in the long run, al-Qaeda would be defeated.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon to the world, yet it remains difficult to define and to counter. Terrorism has been explained in various ways, from the political level to the psychological level. Countering terrorism and terrorist organizations requires several measures that must be taken at the same time. Most countries' counterterrorism strategies in the world are focused on killing, capturing, or deterring terrorists. The success of these strategies is measured with the numbers of killed or captured terrorists. However, instances of terrorism have proved that military sanctions alone are not adequate and efficient enough to destroy terrorism. Counterterrorism strategies should also focus on nonlethal measures, such as economic, political, and social measures. The psychological dimensions of terrorism must be understood, evaluated, and used in countering terrorism.

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism, which makes it difficult to develop counterterrorism strategies. However, examinations of a terrorist organization as a system help us to understand the mechanisms of how it works and develop counter-strategies. As an open system, a terrorist organization requires inputs—recruits, money, weapons, etc.—and converts these inputs to outputs—attacks, sabotage, assassinations, etc. Countering terrorist organizations requires the prevention of inputs, such as new recruits. Other strategies should include measures to reduce outputs by influencing the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization.

In this regard, the nature of terrorist organizations and individual terrorists, such as their motivations, beliefs, and ideologies, must be completely understood, and the connection between a terrorist organization and its target population, by whom they are supported, must be defined and severed. Psychological operations, as nonlethal military operations, can be used to influence members of a population not to join a terrorist organization, thereby severing their support and manipulating the foot soldiers of the terrorist organization to stop their attacks.

Psychological operations are planned operations that convey selected information and indicators to foreign target audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately, the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.<sup>168</sup> Psychological operations decrease the motivation and combat efficiency of an enemy and cause dissidence and disaffection within the enemy's ranks. Moreover, psychological operations may create resistance against a hostile regime or a terrorist organization within a population.

Terrorism may also refer to a species of psychological warfare waged by terrorists through the media. In time, it is understood that the war against terrorism will not be won with bombs and missiles. The way to counter psychological warfare must be with psychological warfare; thus, psychological operations must be the primary weapon in counterterrorism. In this regard, psychological operations can be used as nonlethal military operations with the employment of social, economic, and political sanctions over a population who are favorable to terrorists, or the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization. Psychological operations can be used to deter terrorists, disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations' activities, and influence the population to sever the support given to the terrorist organization. In terms of countering terrorism, the population and the foot soldiers of a terrorist organization become the target audiences. The media and the Internet, via social leaders, can be used as effective communication channels.

In a terrorist organization, psychological operations may inject internal mistrust amongst members, cause internal power struggles, and cause inter-group conflicts, as well as major disagreements about tactics and techniques. Countering terrorism requires two major elements for psychological operations program. These are:

- Inhibiting potential terrorists from joining terrorist groups
- Producing dissension within groups, reducing support for groups and their leaders, and facilitating exit from groups.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 439.

<sup>169</sup> Post, "Psychological Operations and Counter Terrorism," 110.

Psychological operations products, messages, and themes must contain appropriate context, which requires a complete understanding of the target audience. In other words, psychological operations require special intelligence about target audiences, which is different from conventional intelligence.

As is known, intelligence drives operations. Without proper intelligence, operations cannot be properly planned or successfully executed. Decision-makers need intelligence to judge an adversary's course of action, understand the battlefield, and determine their own course of action. As well as in other military operations, psychological operations also require intelligence of the enemy. The relationship between intelligence and psychological operations must be close and continuous since psychological operations requires timely, accurate, and most importantly, relevant intelligence about the enemy. Without proper intelligence, an entire psychological operations campaign could be directed toward the wrong audience or could produce undesirable consequences.

The intelligence requirements for psychological operations are significantly different from those of conventional operations. Conventional units need intelligence about adversaries' forces, numbers, order of battle, weapons systems, and course of action; however, psychological operations units need information concerning the perceptions, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, sensitivities, and patterns of rational and non-rational behavior of adversaries.<sup>170</sup> In addition, the collection method of these requirements also differs from the operational intelligence requirements. Intelligence for psychological operations can best be obtained through human intelligence and open intelligence sources, such as newspapers, magazines, books, academic journals, and foreign broadcasts.

Intelligence requirements for psychological operations products fall into three broad and overlapping categories: target audience determination and analysis, theme development, and product dissemination.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Daugherty, Johns Hopkins University and Operations Research Office, *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, 425.

<sup>171</sup> McElroy, *PSYOP the Invisible Battlefield*.

Target audience analysis includes defining the key issues, concerns, and themes of target audience; in short, identifying potential vulnerabilities. Considering that the target audiences of psychological operations for countering terrorism are the population and foot soldiers of the terrorist organization, cultural intelligence helps us to properly focus on the vulnerabilities of the target audiences. In addition, examining broadly and in detail properties of populations, such as their history, political system, political economy, and so forth, will be useful for developing psychological operations plans, programs, and products that will influence the target audience.

In order to compose an effective message to the target audience, terrorist organizations must be examined in detail, both structurally and ideologically. Examining terrorist organizations helps to identify their vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities, which form the intelligence requirements for theme development, will be the major theme and subject of psychological operations products. These requirements can be obtained through examination of terrorist motivations; terrorist organizations' radicalization, recruitment, and conversion processes; ideology, goals, and strategies; and general structure.

The intelligence requirements for product dissemination include examination of the means and timing for disseminating the psychological operations' products. Which means can be used and how much a target population has access to products become the major issues.

The war on terrorism is prolonged war. In order to defeat terrorist organizations in this war, the psychological aspects of war, as well as the lethal aspects, must be understood by world officials. Populations, which are the center of gravity, must be convinced. Al-Qaeda is also cognizant of this fact and has a great network of support of radical Muslim communities. In order to win the Global War on Terrorism, as a first stage, al-Qaeda, which is the most famous terrorist organization, must be destroyed. In order to destroy al-Qaeda, their support must be severed by preventing new recruits from the population and facilitating exits from the organization. Implementing effective psychological operations may be helpful in achieving this objective. However, in order to carry out effective psychological operations, the vulnerabilities of al-Qaeda must be

determined. The analysis of al-Qaeda's ideology, strategy, members' motivation, radicalization and recruitment processes, and organizational structure would reveal numerous vulnerabilities that can be used in implementing effective information operations. The killing of innocent people, the false interpretations of the concept of jihad, and the unattainable objective of the global caliphate are some of the vulnerabilities of al-Qaeda. By making use of these vulnerabilities, the United States and other countries that suffer from terrorism may influence individuals not to join al-Qaeda or to defect from the terrorist organization. This examination process can also be applied to other terrorist organizations, and their vulnerabilities can be obtained through this examination. Therefore, al-Qaeda, in the short run, and terrorism, in the long run, would both be defeated.

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